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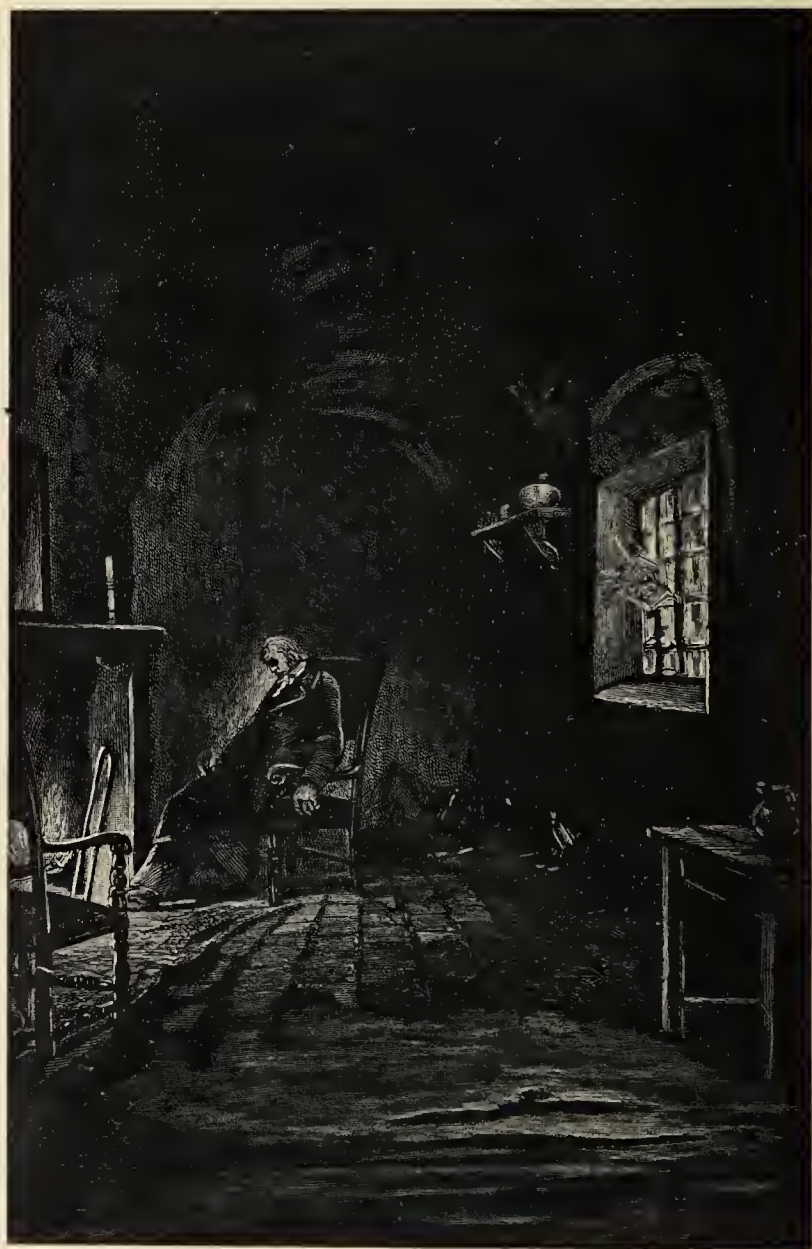






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NEARING THE END

Hugo, vol. iii, Les Miserables



THE VALJEAN EDITION OF THE  
NOVELS OF VICTOR HUGO

# Les Misérables

VOLUME III

BY  
VICTOR HUGO

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# LES MISÉRABLES

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## SAINT DENIS AND IDYL OF THE RUE PLUMET

(CONTINUED)

### BOOK SEVENTH—ARGOT

#### I

#### ORIGIN

**P**IGRITIA is a terrible word.

It engenders a world, *la pégre*, read “robbery,” and a hell, *la pégrenne*, read “hunger.”

So idleness is a mother.

She has a son, robbery, and a daughter, hunger.

Where are we now? In argot.

What is argot? It is at the same time the nation and the idiom; it is robbery under its two aspects; people and language.

When, thirty-four years ago, the narrator of this grave and gloomy story introduced into a work written with the same aim as the present,\* a robber talking argot, there was amazement and clamor. “What! how! argot! But argot is hideous! why, it is the language of convicts, of the galleys, of the prisons, of all that is most abominable in society!” etc.

We have never comprehended this sort of objection.

Since then two powerful romancers, one of whom is a profound observer of the human heart, the other an intrepid friend of the people, Balzac and Eugène Sue, having made bandits talk in their natural tongue as the author of “*Le Dernier Jour d’un Condamné*” had done in 1828, the same outcry was made. It was repeated: “What do these writers mean by this revolting patois? Argot is horrid! argot makes us shudder!”

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\* *Le Dernier Jour d’un Condamné*

Who denies it? Undoubtedly.

Where the purpose is to probe a wound, an abyss, or a society, since when has it been a crime to descend too far, to go to the bottom? We had always thought that it was sometimes an act of courage, and at the very least a simple and useful act, worthy of the sympathetic attention which is merited by a duty accomplished and accepted. Not explore the whole, not study the whole, stop by the way; why? To stop is the part of the lead and not of the leadsman.

Certainly, to go into the lowest depths of the social order, where the earth ends and the mire begins, to search in those thick waters, to pursue, to seize and to throw out still throbbing upon the pavement this abject idiom which streams with filth as it is thus drawn to the light, this pustulous vocabulary in which each word seems a huge ring from some monster of the slime and the darkness, is neither an attractive task nor an easy task. Nothing is more mournful than to contemplate thus bare, by the light of thought, the fearful crawl of argot. It seems, indeed, as if it were a species of horrible beast made for the night, which has just been dragged from its cesspool. We seem to see a frightful living and bristling bush which trembles, moves, quivers, demands its darkness again, menaces and stares. This word resembles a fang, that a quenched and bleeding eye; this phrase seems to move like the claw of a crab. All this is alive with the hideous vitality of things which are organized in disorganization.

Now, since when has horror excluded study? Since when has the sickness driven away the physician? Imagine a naturalist who should refuse to study the viper, the bat, the scorpion, the scolopendra, the tarantula, and who should cast them back into their darkness, saying: "Oh! how ugly they are!" The thinker who should turn away from argot would be like a surgeon who should turn away from an ulcer or a wart. He would be a philologist hesitating to examine a fact of language, a philosopher hesitating to scrutinize a fact of humanity. For, it must, indeed, be said to those who know it not, argot is both a literary phenomenon and a social result. What is argot, properly speaking? Argot is the language of misery.

Here we may be stopped; facts may be generalized,

which is sometimes a method of extenuating them; it may be said that all trades, all professions, one might almost add all the accidents of the social hierarchy and all the forms of the intellect, have their argot. The merchant who says: "Merchantable London stout," "fine quality Marseilles"; the stock-broker who says: "Seller sixty," "dividend off"; the gambler who says: "I'll see you ten better," "will you fight the tiger"? the huissier of the Norman Isles who says: "The enfeoffor restricted to his lands can not claim the fruits of these grounds during the heritable seisin of the renouncer's fixtures"; the philosopher who says: "Phenomenal triplicity"; the whale-hunter who says: "There she blows," "there she breaches"; the phrenologist who says: "Amativeness," "combativeness," "secretiveness"; the fencing-master who says: "Tierce," "quarte," "retreat"; the compositor who says: "a piece of pi"—all, compositor, fencing-master, phrenologist, whale-hunter, philosopher, huissier, gambler, stock-broker, merchant, speak argot. The cobbler who says: "My kid"; the shopkeeper who says: "My counter-jumper"; the barber who says: "My clerk"; the printer who says: "My devil," speak argot. In strictness, and if we will be absolute, all the various methods of saying right and left, the sailor's "larboard" and "starboard," the machinist's "court-side" and "garden-side," the beadle's "epistle side" and "gospel side" are argot. There is an argot of the affected as there was the argot of the *Précieuses*. The Hôtel de Rambouillet bordered, to some extent, upon the Cour des Miracles. There is an argot of duchesses; witness this phrase, written in a love-letter by a very great lady and a very pretty woman of the Restoration: "You will find in these postings a fultitude of reasons why I should libertize." \* Diplomatic ciphers are argot; the pontifical chancellery, in saying "26" for "Rome," "grkztnntyza" for "packet," and "abfxustgrnogrku tu XI" for "Duke of Modena," speaks argot. The physicians of the Middle Ages who, to say "carrot," "radish," and "turnip," said: "Opoponach," "perfroschinum," "reptitalmus," "dracatholicum angelorum," "postmegorum," spoke argot. The sugar manufacturer who says: "Rectified, loaf, clarified,

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\* You will find in this gossip a multitude of reasons why I should take my liberty.



crushed, lump, molasses, mixed, common, burned, caked," this honest manufacturer talks argot. A certain critical school of twenty years ago which said: "The half of Shakespeare is plays upon words and puns," spoke argot. The poet and the artist who, with deep significance, will describe M. de Montmorency as "bourgeois," if he is not familiar with poetry and statues, speak argot. The classic academician who calls flowers "flora," fruits "Pomona," the sea "Neptune," love "the fires," beauty "the attractions," a horse a "courser," the white or the tri-colored cockade "the rose of Bellona," the three-cornered hat "the triangle of Mars," the classic academician speaks argot. Algebra, medicine, botany, have their argot. The language which is employed afloat, that wonderful language of the sea, so complete and so picturesque, which was spoken by Jean Bart, Duquesne, Suffren, and Duperré, which mingles with the whistling of the rigging, with the sound of the speaking trumpet, with the clash of the boarding axe, with the rolling, with the wind, with the squall, with the cannon, is all a heroic and splendid argot which is to the savage argot of crime what the lion is to the jackal.

Undoubtedly. But, whatever can be said about it, this method of understanding the word argot is an extension which even people in general will not admit. As for us, we continue to this word its old acceptation, precise, circumscribed, and definite, and we limit argot to argot. The real argot, the argot *par excellence*, if these words can be joined, the immemorial argot, which was a realm, is nothing more nor less, we repeat, than the ugly, restless, sly, treacherous, venomous, cruel, crooked, vile, deep, deadly language of misery. There is at the extremity of all debasements and all misfortunes a last wretchedness which revolts and determines to enter into a struggle against the whole mass of fortunate things and reigning rights; a hideous struggle in which sometimes by fraud, sometimes by force, at the same time sickly and fierce, it attacks social order with pin thrusts through vice and with club strokes through crime. For the necessities of this struggle misery has invented a language of battle, which is argot.

To buoy up and to sustain above oblivion, above the abyss, were it only a fragment of any language whatever



which man has spoken and which would otherwise be lost, that is to say, one of the elements, good or evil, of which civilization is composed, or with which it is complicated, is to extend the data of social observation; it is to serve civilization itself. This service Plautus rendered, intentionally or unintentionally, by making two Carthaginian soldiers speak Phœnician; this service Molière rendered by making so many of his personages speak Levantine and all manner of patois. Here objections are revived; the Phœnician perfectly right! the Levantine well and good! even patois, so be it! these are languages which have belonged to nations or provinces; but argot? what is the use of preserving argot? what is the use of "buoying up" argot?

To this we shall answer but a word. Certainly, if the language which a nation or a province has spoken is worthy of interest, there is something still more worthy of attention and study in the language which a misery has spoken.

It is the language which has been spoken in France, for example, for more than four centuries, not merely by a particular form of misery, but by misery, every possible human misery.

And then, we insist, the study of social deformities and infirmities, and their indication in order to cure them, is not a work in which choice is permissible. The historian of morals and ideas has a mission no less austere than that of the historian of events. The latter has the surface of civilization, the struggles of the crowns, the births of princes, the marriages of kings, the battles, the assemblies, the great public men, the revolutions in the sunlight, all the exterior; the other historian has the interior, the foundation, the people who work, who suffer, and who wait, overburdened women, agonizing childhood, the dumb wars of man with man, the obscure ferocities, the prejudices, the established iniquities, the subterranean reactions of the law, the secret revolutions of souls, the vague shudderings of the multitudes, the starving, the barefooted, the bare-armed, the disinherited, the orphans, the unfortunate and infamous, all the goblins that wander in darkness. He must descend with a heart at the same time full of charity and of severity, as a brother and as a judge, to those im-

penetrable casemates where crawl in confusion those who bleed and those who strike, those who weep and those who curse, those who fast and those who devour, those who suffer wrong and those who commit it. Have these historians of hearts and souls lesser duties than the historians of exterior facts? Do you think that Danté has fewer things to say than Machiavelli? Is the under world of civilization, because it is deeper and more gloomy, less important than the upper? Do we really know the mountain when we do not know the cavern?

We must say, however, by the way, from some words of what precedes, a decided separation between the two classes of historians might be inferred, which does not exist in our mind. No man is a good historian of the open, visible, signal, and public life of the nations, if he is not, at the same time, to a certain extent, the historian of their deeper and hidden life; and no man is a good historian of the interior, if he knows not how to be, whenever there is need, the historian of the exterior. The history of morals and ideas interpenetrates the history of events, and *vice versa*. They are two orders of different facts which answer to each other, which are always linked with and often produce each other. All the lineaments which Providence traces upon the surface of a nation have their dark but distinct parallels in the bottom, and all the convulsions of the bottom produce upheavals at the surface. True history dealing with all, the true historian deals with all.

Man is not a circle with a single centre; he is an ellipse with two foci. Facts are one, ideas are the other.

Argot is nothing more nor less than a wardrobe in which language, having some bad deed to do, disguises itself. It puts on word-masks and metaphoric rags.

In which way it becomes horrible.

We can hardly recognize it. Is it really the French tongue, the great human tongue? There it is ready to enter upon the scene and give the cue to crime, and fitted for all the employments of the repertory of evil. It walks no more, it hobbles, it limps upon the crutch of the Cour des Miracles, a crutch which can be metamorphosed into a club; it gives itself the name of vagrancy; all the spectres, its dressing-maids, have begrimed it; it drags itself along and rears its head; the two characteristics of the reptile.



It is apt for all parts henceforth, made squint-eyed by the forger, verdigrised by the poisoner, charcoaled by the incendiary's soot; and the murderer puts on his red.

When we listen, on the side of honest people, at the door of society, we overhear the dialogue of those who are without. We distinguish questions and answers. We perceive, without understanding, a hideous murmur, sounding almost like human tones, but nearer a howling than speech. This is argot. The words are uncouth, and marked by an indescribably fantastic beastliness. We think we hear hydras talking.

It is the unintelligible in the dark. It gnashes and it whispers, completing twilight by enigma. It grows black in misfortune, it grows blacker still in crime; these two blacknesses amalgamated make argot. Darkness in the atmosphere, darkness in the deeds, darkness in the voices. Appalling toad language, which comes and goes, hops, crawls, drivels, and moves monstrously in that boundless gray mist made up of rain, night, hunger, vice, lying, injustice, nakedness, asphyxia, and winter, the broad noon-day of the miserable.

Let us have compassion on the chastened. Who, alas! are we ourselves? Who am I who speak to you? Who are you who listen to me? Whence do we come? And is it quite certain that we did nothing before we were born? The earth is not without resemblance to a jail. Who knows that man is not a prisoner of Divine Justice?

Look closely into life. It is so constituted that we feel punishment everywhere.

Are you what is called a fortunate man? Well, you are sad every day. Each day has its great grief or its little care. Yesterday you were trembling for the health of one who is dear to you, to-day you fear for your own; to-morrow it will be an anxiety about money, the next day the slanders of a calumniator, the day after the misfortune of a friend; then the weather, then something broken or lost, then a pleasure for which you are reproached by your conscience or your vertebral column reproaches you; another time, the course of public affairs. Without counting heart troubles. And so on. One cloud is dissipated, another gathers. Hardly one day in a hundred of unbroken joy and of unbroken sunshine. And you are of

that small number who are fortunate! As to other men, stagnant night is upon them.

Reflecting minds make little use of this expression: the happy and the unhappy. In this world, the vestibule of another evidently, there is none happy.

The true division of humanity is this; the luminous and the dark.

To diminish the number of the dark, to increase the number of the luminous, behold the aim. This is why we cry: education, knowledge! to learn to read is to kindle a fire; every syllable spelled sparkles.

But he who says light does not necessarily say joy. There is suffering in the light; in excess it burns. Flame is hostile to the wing. To burn and yet to fly, this is the miracle of genius.

When you know and when you love you shall suffer still. The day dawns in tears. The luminous weep, were it only over the dark.

## II

### ROOTS

**A**RGOT is the language of the dark. Thought is aroused in its gloomiest depths, social philosophy is excited to its most poignant meditations, before this enigmatic dialect which is at once withered and rebellious. Here is chastisement visible. Each syllable has a branded look. The words of the common language here appear as if wrinkled and shriveled under the red-hot iron of the executioner. Some seem still smoking. A phrase affects you like the branded shoulder of a robber suddenly laid bare. Ideas almost refuse to be expressed by these substantives condemned of justice. Its metaphor is sometimes so shameless that we feel it has worn the iron collar.

Still, in spite of all that, and because of all that, this strange dialect has of right its compartment in that great impartial collection in which there is place for the rusty farthing as well as for the gold medal, and which is called literature. Argot, whether we consent to it or not, has its syntax and its poesy. It is a language. If by the deformity of certain terms we recognize that it was mum-



bled by Mandrin, by the splendor of certain metonymies, we feel that it was spoken by Villon.

This verse, so exquisite and so famous:

Mais où sont les neiges d'antan? \*

is a verse of argot. *Antan*—*ante annum*—is a word of the argot of Thunes, which signifies *the past year*, and by extension, *formerly*. There might still be read thirty-five years ago, at the time of the departure of the great chain in 1827, in one of the dungeons of Bicetre, this maxim, engraved on the wall with a nail by a king of Thunes condemned to the galleys: "*Les dabs d'antan trimaient siempre pour la pierre de Cœsre.*" Which means: "The kings of old time always went to be consecrated." In the mind of that king, consecration was the galleys.

The word *decarade*, which expresses the departure of a heavy wagon at a gallop, is attributed to Villon, and it is worthy of him! This word, which strikes fire with four feet, resumes in a masterly onomatopœia the whole of La Fontaine's admirable verse:

Six forts chevaux tiraient un coche.†

In a purely literary point of view, few studies would be more curious and more prolific than that of argot. It is a complete language within a language, a sort of diseased ex-crescence, a sickly graft which has produced a vegetation, a parasite which has its roots in the old Gaelic trunk, the sinister foliage of which creeps over an entire side of the language. This is what may be called the primary aspect—the general aspect of argot. But to those who study language as it should be studied—that is to say, as geologists study the earth—argot appears, as it were, a true alluvium. According as we dig, more or less deep, we find in argot, beneath the old popular French, Provençal, Spanish, Italian, Levantine; this language of the Mediterranean ports, English and German; romance in its three varieties—French romance, Italian romance, Latin, and, finally, Basque and Celtic. A deep and grotesque formation. A subterranean edifice built in common by all the miserable. Each accursed race has deposited its stratum, each suffering

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\* But where are the snows of *antan*?

† Six sturdy horses drew a coach.

has dropped its stone, each heart has given its pebble. A multitude of evil, low or embittered souls, who have passed through life and vanished in eternity, are preserved here almost entire, and in some sort still visible under the form of a monstrous word.

Will you have Spanish? The old Gothic argot swarms with it. Here is *boffette*, blow, which comes from *bofeton*; *vantane*, window (afterward *vanterne*), which comes from *vantana*; *gat*, cat, which comes from *gato*; *acite*, oil, which comes from *aceyte*. Will you have Italian? Here is *spade*, sword, which comes from *spada*; *carvel*, boat, which comes from *caravella*. Will you have English? Here is *bichot*, bishop; *raille*, spy, which comes from *rascal*, *rascallion*; *pilche*, box, which comes from *pilcher*. Will you have German? Here is *calner*, waiter, *kellner*; *hers*, master (*herzog*, duke). Will you have Latin? Here is *frangir*, to break, *frangere*; *affurer*, to rob, *fur*; *cadène*, chain, *catena*; there is a word which appears in all the languages of the Continent, with a sort of mysterious power and authority—the word *magnus*; the Scotchman makes of it his *mac*, which designates the chief of the clan—MacFarlane, MacCallummore—the great Farlane, the great Callummore;\* argot makes of it the *meck*, and afterward the *meg*, that is to say, God. Will you have Basque? Here is *gahisto*, the devil, which comes from *gäiztoa*, evil; *sorgabon*, a good night, which comes from *gabon*, good evening. Will you have Celtic? Here is *blavin*, handkerchief, which comes from *blavet*, gushing water; *mènesse*, woman (in a bad sense), which comes from *meinec*, full of stones; *barant*, brook, from *baranton*, fountain; *goffeur*, locksmith, from *goff*, blacksmith; *guedouze*, death, which comes from *guenn-du*, white-black. Finally, will you have history? Argot calls crowns *maltèses*, a reminiscence of the coins which circulated on the galleys of Malta.

Besides the philological origins which we have just pointed out, argot has other still more natural roots, which spring, so to speak, from the mind of man itself.

First, the direct creation of words. In this is the mystery of languages. To paint by words which have forms, we know not how or why. This is the primitive founda-

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\* It should, however, be observed that *mac* in Celtic means son.



tion of all human language—what might be called the granite. Argot swarms with words of this kind, root-words, made out of whole cloth, we know not where nor by whom, without etymology, without analogy, without derivation; solitary, barbarous, sometimes hideous words, which have a singular power of expression, and which are all alive. The executioner, the *taule*; the forest, the *sabri*; fear, flight, *taf*; the lackey, the *larbin*; the general, the *préfect*; the minister, *pharos*; the devil, the *rabouin*. There is nothing stranger than these words, which mask and yet reveal. Some of them, the *rabouin*, for example, are at the same time grotesque and terrible, and produce the effect of a cyclopean grimace.

Secondly, metaphor. It is the peculiarity of a language, the object of which is to tell everything and conceal everything—to abound in figures. Metaphor is an enigma which offers itself as a refuge to the robber who plots a blow, to the prisoner who plans an escape. No idiom is more metaphorical than *argot*; to unscrew the coco,\* to wring the neck; *to wind up*,† to eat; *to be sheaved*,‡ to be judged; *a rat*,§ a bread thief; *il lanskvine*, it rains, an old and striking figure, which in some sort carries its date with it, which assimilates the long, slanting lines of the rain with the thick and driving pikes of the lansquenets, and which includes in a single word the popular metonymy, “it rains pitchforks.” Sometimes, in proportion as argot passes from the first period to the second, words pass from the savage and primitive state to the metaphorical sense. The devil ceases to be the *rabouin* and becomes the *baker*, he who puts into the oven. This is more witty, but not so grand; something like Racine after Corneille, like Euripides after Æschylus. Certain phrases of argot, which partake of both periods, and have at the same time the barbaric and the metaphorical character, resemble phantasmagorias. *Les sorgeurs vont solliciter des gails à la lune* (the prowlers are going to steal some horses by night). This passes before the mind like a group of spectres. We know not what we see.

Thirdly, expedient. Argot lives upon the language. It uses it at its caprice, it takes from it by chance, and

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\* *Dévisser le coco.*      † *Tortiller.*      ‡ *Etre gerbé.*      § *Un rat.*

contents itself often, when the necessity arises, with summarily and grossly distorting it. Sometimes with common words thus deformed, and mystified with words of pure argot, it forms picturesque expressions, in which we feel the mixture of the two preceding elements, direct creation and metaphor: *Le cab jaspine, je marronne que la roulotte de Pantin trime dans la sabri*, the dog barks, I suspect that the Paris diligence is passing in the woods. *Le dab est sinve, la eabuge est merlouis sière, la fée est bative*, the bourgeois is stupid, the bourgeois is cunning, the daughter is pretty. Most commonly, in order to mislead listeners, argot contents itself with adding promiscuously to all the words of the language a sort of ignoble tail, a termination in *aille*, in *orgue*, in *ièrgue*, or in *uche*. Thus: *Vouziergue trouvaille bonorgue ce gigotmuche?* \* Do you like this leg of mutton? A phrase addressed by Cartouche to a turnkey, to know whether the amount offered for an escape satisfied him. The termination in *mar* is of modern date.

Argot, being the idiom of corruption, is easily corrupted. Moreover, as it always seeks disguise so soon as it perceives it is understood, it transforms itself. Unlike all other vegetation, every ray of light upon it kills what it touches. Thus argot goes on decomposed and recomposed incessantly; an obscure and rapid process which never ceases. It changes more in ten years than the language in ten centuries. Thus the *lartont*† becomes the *lartif*; the *gail*‡ becomes the *gaye*; the *fertauche*,§ the *fertille*; the *nomignard*, the *momacque*; the *figues*,|| the *frusques*; the *chique*,¶ the *egrugeoir*; the *colabre*,\*\* the *colas*. The devil is first *gahisto*, then the *rabouin*, then the baker; the priest is the *ratichon*, then the boar; the dagger is the twenty-two, then the *surin*, then the *lingre*; police officers are *railles*, then *roussins*, then *rousses*, then lacing merchants, then *couqueurs*, then *cognes*; the executioner is the *Taule*, then *Charlot*, then the *atigreur*, then the *becquillard*. In the seventeenth century, to fight was *to take some tobacco*; in the nineteenth, it is *to chew the jaws*. Twenty different expressions have passed between these two extremes. Cartouche would speak Hebrew to Lacenaire. All the words

\* *Trouvez-vous ce gigot bon?*

§ Straw.

|| Clothes.

† Bread.

¶ The church.

‡ Horse.

\*\* The neck.



of this language are perpetually in flight, like the men who use them.

From time to time, however, and because of this very change, the ancient argot reappears and again becomes new. It has its centres in which it is continuous. The Temple preserves the argot of the seventeenth century; Bictère, when it was a prison, preserved the argot of Thunes. There was heard the termination in *anche* of the old Thuners. *Boyanches-tu?*\* (do you drink) *il croyanche*† (he believes). But perpetual movement, nevertheless, is the law.

If the philosopher succeeds in fixing for a moment for the observer this language, which is incessantly evaporating, he falls into painful yet useful meditations. No study is more efficacious and more prolific in instruction. Not a metaphor, not an etymology of argot which does not contain its lesson. Among these men, *to beat* means to feign; they beat a sickness; craft is their strength.

To them the idea of man is inseparable from the idea of shade. The night is called *sorgue*; man, *orgue*. Man is a derivative of night.

They have acquired the habit of considering society as an atmosphere which kills them, as a fatal force, and they speak of their liberty as one would of his health. A man arrested is *sick*; a man condemned is *dead*.

What is the most terrible to the prisoner in the four stone walls which enshroud him is a sort of icy chastity; he calls the dungeon the *castus*. In this funereal place, life without is always under its most cheerful aspect. The prisoner has irons on his feet; you might suppose that he would be thinking that people walk with their feet? No, he is thinking that people dance with their feet; so, let him succeed in sawing through his irons, his first idea is that now he can dance, and he calls the saw a *fandango*.

A name is a *centre*; a deep assimilation. The bandit has two heads, one which regulates his actions and controls him during his whole life, another which he has on his shoulders on the day of his death; he calls the head which counsels him to crime the *sorbonne* and the head which ex-

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\* *Bois-tu?*

† *Il croit.*

piates it the *tronche*. When a man has nothing but rags on his body and vices in his heart, when he has reached that double degradation, material as well as moral, which characterizes, in its two acceptations, the word beggarly, he is at an edge for crime; he is like a well-whetted knife; he has two edges, his distress and his wickedness; so argot does not say "a vagabond"; it says a *reguise*. What are the galleys? a brazier of damnation—a hell. The convict calls himself a *fagot*. Finally, what name do the malefactors give to the prison? the *college*. A whole penitentiary system might spring from this word.

Would you know where most of the songs of the galleys have originated, those refrains called in special phrase the *lirlonfa*? Listen to this.

There was at the Châtelet de Paris a broad, long cellar. This cellar was eight feet deep below the level of the Seine. It had neither windows nor ventilators, the only opening was the door; men could enter, but not air. This cellar had for a ceiling a stone arch, and, for a floor, ten inches of mud. It had been paved with tiles; but, under the oozing of the waters, the pavement had rotted and broken up. Eight feet above the floor a long, massive beam crossed this vault from side to side; from this beam there hung, at intervals, chains three feet in length, and at the end of these chains there were iron collars. Men condemned to the galleys were put into this cellar until the day of their departure for Toulon. They were pushed under this timber, where each had his iron swinging in the darkness, waiting for him. The chains, those pendent arms, and the collars, those open hands, seized these wretches by the neck. They were riveted and they were left there. The chain hung too short, they could not lie down. They remained motionless in this cave, in this blackness, under this timber, almost hung, forced to monstrous exertions to reach their bread or their pitcher, the arch above their heads, the mud up to their knees, their ordure running down their legs, collapsing with fatigue, their hips and knees giving way, hanging by their hands to the chain to rest themselves, unable to sleep except standing, and awakened every moment by the strangling of the collar; some did not awake. In order to eat they had to draw their bread, which was thrown into the mire, up



the leg with the heel, within reach of the hand. How long did they continue thus? A month, two months, six months sometimes; one remained a year. It was the ante-chamber of the galleys. Men were put there for stealing a hare from the king. In this hell-sepulchre what did they do? What can be done in a sepulchre, they agonized, and what can be done in a hell, they sang. For where there is no hope song remains. In the waters of Malta, when a galley was approaching, they heard the song before they heard the oars. The poor poacher, Survincent, who had passed through the cellar-prison of the Châtelet, said: "It was the rhymes which sustained me." Uselessness of poetry. Of what use is rhyme? In this cellar almost all the argot songs took birth. It is from the dungeon of the Grand Châtelet de Paris that the melancholy galley refrain of Montgomery comes: "*Timaloumisaine, timoulamison.*" Most of these songs are dreary; some are cheerful; one is tender:

Icaille est le théâtre  
Du petit dardant.\*

The endeavor is vain; you can not annihilate that eternal relic of the human heart, love.

In this world of dark deeds secrecy is preserved. Secrecy is the interest of all. Secrecy to those wretches is the unity which serves as a basis of union. To violate secrecy is to tear from each member of this savage community something of himself. To inform against, in the energetic language of argot, is called: *Manger le morceau*† As if the informer seized a bit of the substance of all, and fed upon a morsel of the flesh of each.

What is it to receive a blow? The hackneyed metaphor responds: "*C'est voir trente-six chandelles.*"‡ Here argot intervenes and says: *Chandelle, camoufle*. Upon this the common language gives as a synonym for blow, *camouflet*. Thus, by a sort of upward penetration, through the aid of metaphor, that incalculable trajectory, argot rises from the cavern to the academy; and Poulailleur saying: "I light my *camoufle*," makes Voltaire write: "Langleviel la Beaumelle deserves a hundred *camouflets*!"

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\* Here we have the theatre  
Of the little archer (Cupid).

† To eat the morsel.

‡ It is to see thirty-six candles; English to see stars.

A search into argot is a discovery at every step. Study and research into this strange idiom lead to the mysterious point of intersection between popular society and outcast society.

The robber also has his food for powder, his matter for plunder, you, me, the world in general, the *pantre* (*Pan*, everybody).

Argot is speech become a convict.

That the thinking principle of man can be trampled down so low, that it can be bound and dragged there by the obscure tyrannies of fatality, that it can be tied with unknown fastenings in that gulf, this is appalling.

Oh, pitiful thought of the miserable!

Alas! will none come to the help of the human soul in this gloom? Is it its destiny forever to await the mind, the liberator, the huge rider of Pegasus and the hippogriffs, the aurora-hued combatant who descends from the skies with wings, the radiant knight of the future? Shall it always call to its aid the gleaming lance of the ideal in vain? Is it condemned to hear the evil coming terribly through the depths of the abyss, and to see nearer and nearer at hand, under the hideous water, that dragon-head, those jaws reeking with foam, that serpentine waving of claws, distensions and rings? Must it remain there, with no ray, no hope, abandoned to that horrible approach, vaguely scented by the monster, shuddering, disheveled, wringing its hands, forever chained to the rock of night, hopeless Andromeda, white and naked in the darkness?

### III

#### ARGOT WHICH WEEPS AND ARGOT WHICH LAUGHS

AS we see, all argot, the argot of four hundred years ago as well as the argot of the present, is pervaded with that sombre spirit of symbolism which gives to its every word sometimes an appearance of grief, sometimes an air of menace. We feel in it the old, savage gloom of those vagabonds of the Cour des Miracles, who played cards with packs peculiar to themselves, some of which have been preserved. The eight of clubs, for instance, represented a large tree bearing eight enormous clover

leaves, a sort of fantastic personification of the forest. At the foot of this tree a fire was seen at which three hares were roasting a hunter on a spit, and in the background, over another fire, was a smoking pot from which the head of a dog projected. Nothing can be more mournful than these pictured reprisals, upon a pack of cards, in the days of the stake for roasting contrabandists, and the caldron for boiling counterfeiters. The various forms which thought assumed in the realm of argot, even song, even raillery, even menace, all had this impotent and exhausted character. All the songs, some melodies of which have been preserved, were humble and lamentable unto weeping. The *pègre* calls itself *the poor pègre*, and it is always the hare hiding, the mouse escaping, the bird flying. Scarcely does it complain; it contents itself with a sigh; one of its groans has come down to us: "*Je n'entrave que le dail comment meck le daron des orgues peut atiger ses mômes et ses momignards et les locher criblant sans être agite lui-même.*" \* The miserable being, whenever he has time to reflect, imagines himself mean before the law and wretched before society; he prostrates himself, he begs, he turns toward pity; we feel that he recognizes that he is wrong.

Toward the middle of the last century there was a change. The prison songs, the robbers' ritornels acquired, so to speak, an insolent and jovial expression. The plaintive *malure* was supplanted by the *larifla*. We find in the eighteenth century, in almost all the songs of the galleys, the chain-gangs, and the prisons, a diabolical and enigmatic gayety. We hear this boisterous and ringing refrain, which one would say was lighted with a phosphorescent gleam, and which seems as if it were thrown forth upon the forest by a will-o'-the-wisp playing the fife:

"Mirlababi surlababo  
Mirliton ribonribette  
Surlababi mirlababo  
Mirliton ribonribo."

This was sung while cutting a man's throat in a cave or in the edge of a forest.

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\* I do not understand how God, the father of men, can torture his children and his grandchildren, and hear them cry without being tortured himself.



A serious symptom. In the eighteenth century the old melancholy of these gloomy classes is dissipated. They began to laugh. They ridiculed the great *meg* and the great *dab*. Speaking of Louis XV, they call the King of France "the Marquis of Pantin." They are almost cheerful. A sort of flickering light comes from these wretches, as if conscience ceased to weigh upon them. These pitiful tribes of the darkness have no longer the desperate audacity of deeds merely; they have the reckless audacity of mind. A sign that they are losing the perception of their criminality, and that they feel even among thinkers and dreamers some mysterious support which is unconsciously given. A sign that pillage and robbery are beginning to infiltrate even into doctrines and sophisms, in such a way as to lose something of their ugliness by giving much of it to the sophisms and the doctrines. A sign, in short, if no diversion arises, of some prodigious and speedy outburst.

Let us pause for a moment. Whom are we accusing here? Is it the eighteenth century? Is it its philosophy? Certainly not. The work of the eighteenth century is sound and good. The encyclopedists, Diderot at their head; the physiocratists, Turgot at their head; the philosophers, Voltaire at their head; the utopists, Rousseau at their head; these are four sacred legions. To them the immense advance of humanity toward the light is due. They are the four vanguards of the human race going to the four cardinal points of progress, Diderot toward the beautiful, Turgot toward the useful, Voltaire toward the true, Rousseau toward the just. But, beside and beneath the philosophers, there were the sophists, a poisonous vegetation mingled with the healthy growth, hemlock in the virgin forest. While the executioner was burning upon the chief staircase of the Palais de Justice the grand liberating books of the century, writers now forgotten were publishing, with the privilege of the king, many strangely disorganizing writings, greedily read by the outcast. Some of these publications, strange to say, patronized by a prince, are still in the *Bibliothèque Secrète*. These facts, deep rooted, but ignored, were unperceived on the surface. Sometimes the very obscurity of a fact is its danger. It is obscure because it is subterranean. Of all the writers,

he, perhaps, who dug the most unwholesome gallery through the masses was Restif de la Bretonne.

This work, adapted to all Europe, committed greater ravages in Germany than anywhere else. In Germany, during a certain period, summed up by Schiller in his famous drama, "The Robbers," robbery and plunder, elevated into a protest against property and labor, appropriated certain elementary, specious, and false ideas, just in appearance, absurd in reality, enwrapped themselves in these ideas, disappeared in them in some sort, took an abstract name, and passed into the state of theory, and in this wise circulated among the laboring, suffering, and honest multitudes, unknown even to the imprudent chemists who had prepared the mixture, unknown even to the masses who accepted it. Whenever a thing of this kind occurs it is serious. Suffering engenders wrath; and while the prosperous classes blind themselves, or fall asleep, which also is to close the eyes, the hatred of the unfortunate classes lights its torch at some fretful or ill-formed mind which is dreaming in a corner, and begins to examine society. Examination by hatred—a terrible thing.

Hence, if the misfortune of the time so wills, those frightful commotions which were formerly called *Jacqueries*, in comparison with which purely political agitations are child's play, and which are not merely the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor, but the revolt of discomfort against well-being. All falls then.

Jacqueries are people-quakes.

This danger, imminent perhaps in Europe toward the end of the eighteenth century, was cut short by the French Revolution, that immense act of probity.

The French Revolution, which is nothing more nor less than the ideal armed with the sword, started to its feet, and by the very movement closed the door of evil and opened the door of good.

It cleared up the question, promulgated truth, drove away miasma, purified the century, crowned the people.

We may say of it that it created man a second time, in giving him a second soul, his rights.

The nineteenth century inherits and profits by its work, and to-day the social catastrophe which we just now indicated is simply impossible. Blind is he who prophesies it!



Silly is he who dreads it! Revolution is vaccination for Jacquerie.

Thanks to the Revolution, social conditions are changed. The feudal and monarchical diseases are no longer in our blood. There is nothing more of the Middle Ages in our constitution. We live no longer in the times when frightful interior swarms made eruption, when men heard beneath their feet the obscure course of a sullen sound, when there appeared on the surface of civilization some mysterious uprising of mole-hills, when the soil cracked, when the mouths of caverns opened, and when men saw monstrous heads spring suddenly from the earth.

The Revolutionary sense is a moral sense. The sentiment of rights, developed, develops the sentiment of duty. The law of all is liberty, which ends where the liberty of others begins, according to Robespierre's admirable definition. Since '89, the entire people has been expanding in the sublimated individuals; there is no poor man, who, having his rights, has not his ray; the starving man feels within himself the honor of France; the dignity of the citizen is an interior armor; he who is free is scrupulous; he who votes reigns. Hence incorruptibility; hence the abortion of innoxious lusts; hence the eyes heroically cast down before temptations. The Revolutionary purification is such that on a day of deliverance, a 14th of July or a 10th of August, there is no longer a mob. The first cry of the enlightened and enlarging multitudes is: death to robbers! Progress is an honest man; the ideal and the absolute pick no pockets. By whom, in 1848, were the chests escorted which contained the riches of the Tuileries? by the rag-pickers of the Faubourg St. Antoine. The rag mounted guard over the treasure. Virtue made these tatters resplendent. There was there, in those chests, in boxes hardly closed, some even half-open, amid one hundred dazzling caskets, that old crown of France, all in diamonds, surmounted by the regent's carbuncle of royalty, which was worth 30,000,000 francs. Barefooted they guarded that crown.

No more Jacquerie then. I regret it on account of the able. That is the old terror which has had its last effect, and which can never henceforth be employed in politics. The great spring of the red sceptre is broken. Every-

body knows it now. The scarecrow no longer scares. The birds take liberties with the puppet, the beetles make free with it, the bourgeois laugh at it.

## IV

## THE TWO DUTIES: TO WATCH AND TO HOPE

**T**HIS being so, is all social danger dissipated? Certainly not. No Jacquerie. Society may be reassured on that account; the blood will rush to its head no more, but let it take thought as to the manner of its breathing. Apoplexy is no longer to be feared, but consumption is there. The consumption of society is called misery.

We die undermined as well as stricken down.

Let us not weary of repeating it, to think first of all of the outcast and sorrowful multitudes, to solace them, to give them air, to enlighten them, to love them, to enlarge their horizon magnificently, to lavish upon them education in all its forms, to offer them the example of labor, never the example of idleness, to diminish the weight of the individual burden by intensifying the idea of the universal object, to limit poverty without limiting wealth, to create vast fields of public and popular activity, to have, like Briareus, one hundred hands to stretch out on all sides to the exhausted and the feeble, to employ the collective power in the great duty of opening work-shops for all arms, schools for all aptitudes, and laboratories for all intelligences, to increase wages, to diminish suffering, to balance the ought and the have, that is to say, to proportion enjoyment to effort and gratification to need; in one word, to evolve from the social structure, for the benefit of those who suffer and those who are ignorant, more light and more comfort; this is, let sympathetic souls forget it not, the first of fraternal obligations; this is, let selfish hearts know it, the first of political necessities.

And, we must say, all that is only a beginning. The true statement is this: labor can not be a law without being a right.

We do not dwell upon it; this is not the place.

If nature is called providence, society should be called foresight.

Intellectual and moral growth is not less indispensable



than material amelioration. Knowledge is a viaticum, thought is of primary necessity, truth is nourishment as well as wheat. A reason, by fasting from knowledge and wisdom, becomes puny. Let us lament, as over stomachs, over minds which do not eat. If there is anything more poignant than a body agonizing for want of bread it is a soul which is dying of hunger for light.

All progress is tending toward the solution. Some day we shall be astounded. The human race rising, the lower strata will quite naturally come out from the zone of distress. The abolition of misery will be brought about by a simple elevation of level.

This blessed solution we should do wrong to distrust.

The past, it is true, is very strong at the present hour. It is reviving. This revivification of a corpse is surprising. Here it is walking and advancing. It seems victorious; this dead man is a conqueror. He comes with his legion, the superstitions; with his sword, despotism; with his banner, ignorance; within a little time he has won ten battles. He advances, he threatens, he laughs, he is at our doors. As for ourselves we shall not despair. Let us sell the field whereon Hannibal is camped.

We who believe what can we fear?

There is no backward flow of ideas more than of rivers.

But let those who desire not the future think of it. In saying no to progress it is not the future which they condemn, but themselves. They give themselves a melancholy disease; they inoculate themselves with the past. There is but one way of refusing to-morrow, that is to die.

Now, no death; that of the body as late as possible, that of the soul, never, is what we desire.

Yes, the enigma shall say its word, the sphinx shall speak, the problem shall be resolved. Yes, the people, rough-hewn by the eighteenth century, shall be completed by the nineteenth. An idiot is he who doubts it! The future birth, the speedy birth of universal well-being, is a divinely fatal phenomenon.

Immense pushings together rule human affairs and lead them all in a given time to the logical condition; that is to say, to equilibrium; that is to say, to equity. A force composite of earth and of heaven results from humanity and governs it; this force is a worker of miracles; miracu-

lous issues are no more difficult to it than extraordinary changes. Aided by science which comes from man, and by the event which comes from another, it is little dismayed by those contradictions in the posture of problems which seem impossibilities to the vulgar. It is no less capable of making a solution leap forth from the comparison of ideas than a teaching from the comparison of facts, and we may expect everything from this mysterious power of progress which some fine day confronts the Orient with the Occident in the depths of a sepulchre, and makes the Imaums talk with Bonaparte in the interior of the great pyramid.

In the meantime, no halt, no hesitation, no interruption in the grand march of minds. Social philosophy is essentially science and peace. Its aim is, and its result must be, to dissolveangers by the study of antagonisms. It examines, it scrutinizes, it analyzes; then it recomposes. It proceeds by way of reduction, eliminating hatred from all.

That a society may be swamped in a gale which breaks loose over men has been seen more than once; history is full of shipwrecks of peoples and of empires; customs, laws, religions, some fine day, the mysterious hurricane passes by and sweeps them all away. The civilizations of India, Chaldea, Persia, Assyria, Egypt have disappeared one after the other. Why? we know not. What are the causes of these disasters? we do not know. Could these societies have been saved? was it their own fault? did they persist in some fatal vice which destroyed them? how much of suicide is there in these terrible deaths of a nation and of a race? Questions without answer. Darkness covers the condemned civilizations. They were not seaworthy, for they were swallowed up; we have nothing more to say: and it is with a sort of bewilderment that we behold, far back in that ocean which is called the past, behind those colossal billows, the centuries, the foundering of those huge ships—Babylon, Nineveh, Tarsus, Thebes, Rome—under the terrible blast which comes from all the mouths of darkness. But darkness there, light here. We are ignorant of the diseases of the ancient civilizations, we know the infirmities of our own. We have everywhere upon it the rights of light; we contemplate its beauties and we lay bare



its deformities. Where it is unsound we probe; and, once the disease is determined, the study of the cause leads to the discovery of the remedy. Our civilization, the work of twenty centuries, is at once their monster and their prodigy; it is worth saving. It will be saved. To relieve it is much already; to enlighten is something more. All the labors of modern social philosophy ought to converge toward this end. The thinker of to-day has a great duty to auscultate civilization.

We repeat it, this auscultation is encouraging; and it is by this persistence in encouragement that we would finish these few pages, austere interlude of a sorrowful drama. Beneath the mortality of society we feel the imperishability of humanity. Because it has here and there those wounds, craters, and those ringworms, solfataras, because of a volcano which breaks and which throws out its pus, the globe does not die. The diseases of a people do not kill man.

And, nevertheless, he who follows the social clinic shakes his head at times. The strongest, the tenderest, the most logical have their moments of fainting.

Will the future come? It seems that we may ask this question when we see such terrible shadow. Sullen face-to-face of the selfish and the miserable. On the part of the selfish, prejudices, the darkness of the education of wealth, appetite increasing through intoxication, a stupefaction of prosperity which deafens, a dread of suffering which, with some, is carried even to aversion for sufferers, an implacable satisfaction, the me so puffed up that it closes the soul; on the part of the miserable, covetousness, envy, hatred of seeing others enjoy, the deep yearnings of the human animal toward the gratifications, hearts full of gloom, sadness, want, fatality, ignorance impure and simple.

Must we continue to lift our eyes toward heaven? is the luminous point which we there discern of those which are quenched? The ideal is terrible to see, thus lost in the depths, minute, isolated, imperceptible, shining, but surrounded by all those great black menaces monstrously massed about it; yet in no more danger than a star in the jaws of the clouds.



BOOK EIGHTH—ENCHANTMENTS AND  
DESOLATIONS

## I

## SUNSHINE

THE reader has understood that Eponine, having recognized through the grating the inhabitant of that Rue Plumet, to which Magnon had sent her, had begun by diverting the bandits from the Rue Plumet, had then conducted Marius thither, and that, after several days of ecstasy before that grating, Marius, drawn by that force which pushes the iron toward the magnet and the lover toward the stones of which the house of her whom he loves is built, had finally entered Cosette's garden as Romeo did the garden of Juliet. It had even been easier for him than for Romeo; Romeo was obliged to scale a wall, Marius had only to push aside a little one of the bars of the decrepit grating, which was loosened in its rusty sockets, like the teeth of old people. Marius was slender, and easily passed through.

As there was never anybody in the street, and as, moreover, Marius entered the garden only at night, he ran no risk of being seen.

From that blessed and holy hour, when a kiss affianced these two souls, Marius came every evening. If at this period of her life Cosette had fallen into the love of a man who was unscrupulous she would have been ruined: for there are generous natures which give themselves, and Cosette was one. One of the magnanimities of woman is to yield. Love, at that height at which it is absolute, is associated with an inexpressibly celestial blindness of modesty. But what risk do you run, oh, noble souls! Often you give the heart, we take the body. Your heart remains to you, and you look upon it in the darkness and shudder. Love has no middle term; either it destroys or it saves. All human destiny is this dilemma. This dilemma, destruction or salvation, no fatality proposes more inexorably than love. Love is life, if it be not death. Cradle, coffin also. The same sentiment says yes and no in the

human heart. Of all the things which God has made, the human heart is that which sheds most light, and, alas! most night.

God willed that the love which Cosette met should be one of those loves which save.

Through all the month of May of that year, 1832, there were there, every night, in that poor, wild garden, under that shrubbery each day more odorous and more dense, two beings composed of every chastity and every innocence, overflowing with all the felicities of heaven, more nearly archangels than men, pure, noble, intoxicated, radiant, who were resplendent to each other in the darkness. It seemed to Cosette that Marius had a crown, and to Marius that Cosette had a halo. They touched each other, they beheld each other, they clasped each other's hands, they pressed closely to each other; but there was a distance which they did not pass. Not that they respected it; they were ignorant of it. Marius felt a barrier, the purity of Cosette, and Cosette felt a support, the loyalty of Marius. The first kiss was the last also. Marius since had not gone beyond touching Cosette's hand or her neckerchief or her ringlets with his lips. Cosette was to him a perfume and not a woman. He breathed her. She refused nothing and he asked nothing. Cosette was happy and Marius was satisfied. They lived in that ravishing condition which might be called the dazzling of a soul by a soul. It was that ineffable first embrace of two virginities in the ideal. Two swans meeting upon the Jungfrau.

At that hour of love, an hour when passion is absolutely silent under the omnipotence of ecstasy, Marius, the pure and seraphic Marius, would have been capable rather of visiting a public woman than of lifting Cosette's dress to the height of her ankle. Once, on a moonlight night, Cosette stooped to pick up something from the ground, her dress loosened and displayed the rounding of her bosom. Marius turned away his eyes.

What passed between these two beings? Nothing. They were adoring each other.

At night, when they were there, this garden seemed a living and sacred place. All the flowers opened about them and proffered them their incense; they, too, opened their souls and poured them forth to the flowers; the lusty

and vigorous vegetation trembled full of sap and intoxication about these two innocent creatures, and they spoke words of love at which the trees thrilled.

What were these words? Whispers, nothing more. These whispers were enough to arouse and excite all this nature. A magic power, which one can hardly understand by this prattle, which is made to be borne away and dissipated like whiffs of smoke by the wind under the leaves. Take from these murmurs of two lovers that melody which springs from the soul, and which accompanies them like a lyre, what remains is only a shade. You say: "What! Is that all?" Yes, childish things, repetitions, laughs about nothing, inutilities, absurdities, all that is deepest and most sublime in the world! the only things which are worth being said and listened to.

These absurdities, these poverties; the man who has never heard them, the man who has never uttered them, is an imbecile and a wicked man.

Cosette said to Marius: "Do you know my name is Euphrasie?"

"Euphrasie? Why, no; your name is Cosette."

"Oh! Cosette is such an ugly name that they gave me somehow when I was little. But my real name is Euphrasie. Don't you like that name, Euphrasie?"

"Yes, but Cosette is not ugly."

"Do you like it better than Euphrasie?"

"Why, yes."

"Then I like it better, too. It is true, it is pretty, Cosette. Call me Cosette."

And the smile which she added made of this dialogue an idyl worthy of a celestial grove.

At another time she looked at him steadily and exclaimed: "Monsieur, you are handsome, you are beautiful, you are witty, you are not stupid in the least, you are much wiser than I, but I defy you with these words: 'I love you!'"

And Marius, in a cloudless sky, thought he heard a strophe sung by a star.

Or again, she gave him a little tap because he coughed, and said to him: "Do not cough, monsieur; I do not allow coughing here without permission. It is very naughty to cough and disturb me. I want you to be well, because, in



the first place, if you were not well I should be very unhappy. What will you have me do for you?"

And that was all purely divine.

Once Marius said to Cosette: "Just think, I thought at one time that your name was Ursula."

This made them laugh the whole evening.

In the midst of another conversation he happened to exclaim: "Oh! one day at the Luxembourg I would have been glad to break the rest of the bones of an Invalid!"

But he stopped short and went no further. He would have been obliged to speak to Cosette of her garter, and that was impossible for him. There was an unknown coast there—the flesh—before which this immense innocent love recoiled with a kind of sacred awe.

Marius imagined life with Cosette like this without anything else: to come every evening to the Rue Plumet, to put aside the complaisant old bar of the president's grating, to sit side by side upon this seat, to behold through the trees the scintillation of the commencing night, to make the fold of the knee of his pantaloons intimate with the fulness of Cosette's dress, to caress her thumb nail, to say dearest to her, to inhale one after the other the odor of the same flower, forever, indefinitely. During this time the clouds were passing above their heads. Every breath of wind bears away more dreams from man than clouds from the sky.

That this chaste, almost severe, love was absolutely without gallantry we will not say. "To pay compliments" to her whom we love is the first method of caressing, a demi-audacity venturing. A compliment is something like a kiss through a veil. Pleasure sets her soft seal there, even while hiding herself. Before pleasure the heart recoils to love better. Marius' soft words, all saturated as they were with chimera, were, so to speak, sky-blue. The birds, when they are flying on high beside the angels, must hear such words. There were mingled with them, however, life, humanity, all the positiveness of which Marius was capable. It was what is said in the grotto, a prelude to what will be said in the alcove: a lyrical effusion, the strophe and the sonnet mingled, the gentle hyperboles of cooing, all the refinements of adoration arranged



in a bouquet and exhaling a subtle celestial perfume, an ineffable warbling of heart to heart.

"Oh!" murmured Marius, "how beautiful you are! I dare not look at you. That is why I stare at you. You are a grace. I do not know what is the matter with me. The hem of your dress, when the tip of your shoe appears, completely overwhelms me. And then what enchanting glow when I see a glimpse of your thought. You reason astonishingly. It seems to me at times that you are a dream. Speak, I am listening to you, I am wondering at you. Oh, Cosette! how strange and charming it is! I am really mad. You are adorable, mademoiselle. I study your feet with the microscope and your soul with the telescope."

And Cosette answered: "I have been loving you a little more every minute since this morning."

Questions and answers fared as they might in this dialogue, always falling naturally at last upon love, like those loaded toys which always fall upon their base.

Cosette's whole person was artlessness, ingenuousness, transparency, whiteness, candor, radiance. We might say of Cosette that she was pellucid. She gave to him who saw her a sensation of April and of dawn. There was dew in her eyes. Cosette was a condensation of auroral light in womanly form.

It was quite natural that Marius, adoring her, should admire her. But the truth is that this little schoolgirl, fresh from the convent mill, talked with an exquisite penetration, and said at times all manner of true and delicate words. Her prattle was conversation. She made no mistakes and saw clearly. Woman feels and speaks with the tender instinct of the heart, that infallibility. Nobody knows like a woman how to say things at the same time sweet and profound. Sweetness and depth, this is all of woman; this is all of heaven.

In this fulness of felicity, at every instant tears came to their eyes. An insect trodden upon, a feather falling from a nest, a twig of hawthorn broken, moved their pity, and their ecstasy, sweetly drowned in melancholy, seemed to ask nothing better than to weep. The most sovereign symptom of love is a tenderness sometimes almost insupportable.

And, by the side of this—all these contradictions are the lightning play of love—they were fond of laughing, and laughed with a charming freedom, and so familiarly that they sometimes seemed almost like two boys. Nevertheless, though hearts intoxicated with chastity may be all unconscious, nature, who can never be forgotten, is always present. There she is with her aim, animal yet sublime; and whatever may be the innocence of souls, we feel, in the most modest intercourse, the adorable and mysterious shade which separates a couple of lovers from a pair of friends.

They worshiped each other.

The permanent and the immutable continue. There is loving, there is smiling and laughing and little pouts with the lips and interlacing of the fingers and fondling speech, yet that does not hinder eternity. Two lovers hide in the evening, in the twilight, in the invisible with the birds, with the roses; they fascinate each other in the shadow with their hearts, which they throw into their eyes; they murmur, they whisper, and during all this time immense libations of stars fill infinity.

## II

### THE STUPEFACTION OF COMPLETE HAPPINESS

THEIR existence was vague, bewildered with happiness. They did not perceive the cholera which decimated Paris that very month. They had been as confidential with each other as they could be, but this had not gone very far beyond their names. Marius had told Cosette that he was an orphan, that his name was Marius Pontmercy, that he was a lawyer, that he lived by writing things for publishers, that his father was a colonel, that he was a hero, and that he, Marius, had quarreled with his grandfather, who was rich. He had, also, said something about being a baron; but that had produced no effect upon Cosette. Marius baron! She did not comprehend. She did not know what that word meant. Marius was Marius. On her part she had confided to him that she had been brought up at the convent of the Petit Picpus; that her mother was dead as well as his; that her father's name was M. Fauchelevent; that he was very kind; that he gave

much to the poor; but that he was poor himself, and that he deprived himself of everything while he deprived her of nothing.

Strange to say, in the kind of symphony in which Marius had been living since he had seen Cosette, the past, even the most recent, had become so confused and distant to him that what Cosette told him satisfied him fully. He did not even think to speak to her of the night adventure at the Gorbeau tenement, the Thenardiers, the burning and the strange attitude and the singular flight of her father. Marius had temporarily forgotten all that; he did not even know at night what he had done in the morning, nor where he had breakfasted, nor who had spoken to him; he had songs in his ear which rendered him deaf to every other thought; he existed only during the hours in which he saw Cosette. Then, as he was in heaven, it was quite natural that he should forget the earth. They were both supporting with languor the undefinable burden of the immaterial pleasures. Thus live these somnambulists called lovers.

Alas! who has not experienced all these things? Why comes there an hour when we leave this azure and why does life continue afterward?

Love almost replaces thought. Love is a burning forgetfulness of all else. Ask logic then of passion. There is no more an absolute logical chain in the human heart than there is a perfect geometrical figure in the celestial mechanics. To Cosette and Marius there was nothing in being beyond Marius and Cosette. The universe about them had fallen out of sight. They lived in a golden moment. There was nothing before, nothing after. It is doubtful if Marius thought whether Cosette had a father. He was so dazzled that all was effaced from his brain. Of what, then, did they talk, these lovers? We have seen of the flowers, the swallows, the setting sun, the rising of the moon, of all important things. They had told all, except everything. The all of lovers is nothing. But the father, the realities, that garret, those bandits, that adventure, what was the use? And was he quite certain that that nightmare was real? They were two, they adored each other, there was nothing but that. Everything else was not. It is probable that this oblivion of the hell behind



us is a part of arrival at paradise. Have we seen demons? Are there any? Have we trembled? Have we suffered? We know nothing now about that. A rosy cloud rests upon it all.

These two beings, then, were living thus, very high, with all the improbability of nature: neither at the nadir nor at the zenith, between man and the seraph, above earth, below the ether, in the cloud; scarcely flesh and bone, soul and ecstasy from head to foot; too sublimated already to walk upon the earth and yet too much weighed down with humanity to disappear in the sky, in suspension like atoms which are awaiting precipitation; apparently outside of destiny; ignoring that beaten track, yesterday, to-day, to-morrow; astounded, swooping, floating; at times, light enough to soar into the infinity; almost ready for the eternal flight.

They were sleeping awake in this rocking-cradle. Oh, splendid lethargy of the real overwhelmed by the ideal!

Sometimes, beautiful as was Cosette, Marius closed his eyes before her. With closed eyes is the best way of looking at the soul.

Marius and Cosette did not ask where this would lead them. They looked upon themselves as arrived. It is a strange demand for men to ask that love should anywhere.

### III

#### SHADOW COMMENCES

**J**EAN VALJEAN suspected nothing.

Cosette, a little less dreamy than Marius, was cheerful, and that was enough to make Jean Valjean happy. The thoughts of Cosette, her tender preoccupations, the image of Marius which filled her soul, detracted nothing from the incomparable purity of her beautiful, chaste, and smiling forehead. She was at the age when the maiden bears her love as the angel bears her lily. And then when two lovers have an understanding they always get along well; any third person who might disturb their love is kept in perfect blindness by a very few precautions, always the same for all lovers. Thus never any objections from Cosette to Jean Valjean. Did he wish to take a walk? yes,

my dear father. Did he wish to remain at home? very well. Would he spend the evening with Cosette? she was in raptures. As he always retired at ten o'clock, at such times Marius would not come to the garden till after that hour, when from the street he would hear Cosette open the glass-door leading out on the steps. We need not say that Marius was never met by day, Jean Valjean no longer even thought that Marius was in existence. Once only, one morning, he happened to say to Cosette: "Why, you have something white on your back!" The evening before, Marius in a transport had pressed Cosette against the wall.

Old Toussaint, who went to bed early, thought of nothing but going to sleep, once her work was done, and was ignorant of all, like Jean Valjean.

Never did Marius set foot into the house. When he was with Cosette they hid themselves in a recess near the steps, so that they could neither be seen nor heard from the street, and they sat there, contenting themselves often, by way of conversation, with pressing each other's hands twenty times a minute while looking into the branches of the trees. At such moments a thunderbolt might have fallen within thirty paces of them and they would not have suspected it, so deeply was the reverie of the one absorbed and buried in the reverie of the other.

Limpid purities. Hours all white; almost all alike. Such loves as these are a collection of lily leaves and dove-down.

The whole garden was between them and the street. Whenever Marius came in and went out he carefully replaced the bar of the grating in such a way that no derangement was visible.

He went away commonly about midnight, returning to Courfeyrac's. Courfeyrac said to Bahorel:

"Would you believe it? Marius comes home nowadays at one o'clock in the morning."

Bahorel answered:

"What would you expect? Every young person has his wild oats."

At times Courfeyrac folded his arms, assumed a serious air and said to Marius:

"You are getting dissipated, young man!"

Courfeyrac, a practical man, was not pleased at this

reflection of an invisible paradise upon Marius; he had little taste for unpublished passions; he was impatient at them, and he occasionally would serve Marius with a summons to return to the real.

One morning he threw out this admonition:

"My dear fellow, you strike me at present as being situated in the moon, kingdom of dream, province of illusion, capital soap-bubble. Come, be a good boy; what is her name?"

But nothing could make Marius "confess." You might have torn his nails out sooner than one of the two sacred syllables which composed that ineffable name, "Cosette." True love is luminous as the dawn and silent as the grave. Only there was, to Courfeyrac, this change in Marius, that he had a radiant taciturnity.

During this sweet month of May Marius and Cosette knew these transcendent joys:

To quarrel and to say monsieur and mademoiselle, merely to say Marius and Cosette better afterward.

To talk at length, and with most minute detail, of people who did not interest them in the least; a further proof that, in this ravishing opera which is called love, the libretto is almost nothing.

For Marius, to listen to Cosette talking dress.

For Cosette, to listen to Marius talking politics.

To hear, knee touching knee, the wagons roll along the Rue de Babylone.

To gaze upon the same planet in space, or the same worm glow in the grass.

To keep silence together; a pleasure still greater than to talk.

Etc., etc.

Meanwhile various complications were approaching.

One evening Marius was making his way to the rendezvous by the Boulevard des Invalides; he usually walked with his head bent down; as he was just turning the corner of the Rue Plumet he heard some one saying very near him:

"Good-evening, M. Marius."

He looked up and recognized Eponine.

This produced a singular effect upon him. He had not thought even once of this girl since the day she brought



him to the Rue Plumet; he had not seen her again, and she had completely gone out of his mind. He had motives of gratitude only toward her; he owed his present happiness to her, and still it was annoying to him to meet her.

It is a mistake to suppose that passion, when it is fortunate and pure, leads man to a state of perfection; it leads him simply, as we have said, to a state of forgetfulness. In this situation man forgets to be bad, but he also forgets to be good. Gratitude, duty, necessary and troublesome memories, vanish. At any other time Marius would have felt very differently toward Eponine. Absorbed in Cosette, he had not even clearly in his mind that this Eponine's name was Eponine Thenardier, and that she bore a name written in his father's will, that name to which he would have been a few months before so ardently devoted. We show Marius just as he was. His father, himself, disappeared somewhat from his soul beneath the splendor of his love.

He answered with some embarrassment:

"What! is it you, Eponine?"

"Why do you speak to me so sternly? Have I done anything to you?"

"No," answered he.

Certainly he had nothing against her. Far from it. Only, he felt that he could not do otherwise, now that he had whispered to Cosette, than speak coldly to Eponine.

As he was silent she exclaimed:

"Tell me, now—"

Then she stopped. It seemed as if words failed this creature, once so reckless and so bold. She attempted to smile and could not. She resumed:

"Well—"

Then she was silent again and stood with her eyes cast down.

"Good-evening, M. Marius," said she all at once abruptly, and she went away.

## IV

CAB ROLLS IN ENGLISH AND YELPS IN ARGOT

THE next day—it was the 3d of June, 1832, a date which must be noted on account of the grave events which were at that time suspended over the horizon of Paris like thunder-clouds—at nightfall, Marius was following the same path as the evening before, with the same rapturous thoughts in his heart, when he perceived, under the trees of the boulevard, Eponine approaching him. Two days in succession, this was too much. He turned hastily, left the boulevard, changed his route and went to the Rue Plumet through the Rue Monsieur.

This caused Eponine to follow him to the Rue Plumet, a thing which she had not done before. She had been content until then to see him on his way through the boulevard without even seeking to meet him. The evening previous, only, had she tried to speak to him.

Eponine followed him then, without a suspicion on his part. She saw him push aside the bar of the grating and glide into the garden.

“Why!” said she, “he is going into the house.”

She approached the grating, felt of the bars one after another and easily recognized the one which Marius had displaced.

She murmured in an undertone, with a mournful accent:

“None of that, Lisette!”

She sat down upon the surbase of the grating close beside the bar, as if she were guarding it. It was just the point at which the grating joined the neighboring wall. There was an obscure corner there in which Eponine was entirely hidden.

She remained thus for more than an hour without stirring and without breathing, a prey to her own thoughts.

About ten o'clock in the evening, one of the two or three passers in the Rue Plumet, a belated old bourgeois who was hurrying through this deserted and ill-famed place, keeping along by the garden grating, on reaching the angle which the grating made with the wall, heard a sullen and threatening voice which said:

"I wouldn't be surprised if he came every evening!"

He cast his eyes about him, saw nobody, dared not look into that dark corner, and was very much frightened. He doubled his pace.

This person had reason to hasten, for a very few moments afterward six men, who were walking separately and at some distance from each other along the wall, and who might have been taken for a tipsy patrol, entered the Rue Plumet.

The first to arrive at the grating of the garden stopped and waited for the others; in a second they were all six together.

These men began to talk in a low voice:

"It is *icicaille*," said one of them.

"Is there a *cab*\* in the garden?" asked another.

"I don't know. At all events I have *levé*† a bullet which we will make him *morfiler*."‡

"Have you some mastic to *frangis* the *vanterne*?"§

"Yes."

"The grating is old," added a fifth, who had a voice like a ventriloquist.

"So much the better," said the second who had spoken.

"It will not *cribler*|| under the *bastringue*,¶ and will not be so hard to *faucher*."\*\*\*

The sixth, who had not yet opened his mouth, began to examine the grating as Eponine had done an hour before, grasping each bar successively and shaking it carefully. In this way he came to the bar which Marius had loosened. Just as he was about to lay hold of this bar a hand, starting abruptly from the shadow, fell upon his arm, he felt himself pushed sharply back by the middle of his breast, and a roughened voice said to him, without crying out:

"There is a *cab*."

At the same time he saw a pale girl standing before him.

The man felt that commotion which is always given by the unexpected. He bristled up hideously; nothing is so

\* Dog. † Brought. From the Spanish *llevar*. ‡ Eat.

§ To break a pane by means of a plaster of mastic, which, sticking to the window, holds the pieces of glass and prevents noise.

|| Cry.

¶ Saw.

\*\* Cut.



frightful to see as ferocious beasts which are startled; their appearance, when terrified, is terrifying. He recoiled and stammered:

"What is this creature?"

"Your daughter."

It was, indeed, Eponine who was speaking to Thenardier.

On the appearance of Eponine the five others, that is to say, Claquesous, Gueulemer, Babet, Montparnasse, and Brujon, approached without a sound, without haste, without saying a word, with the ominous slowness peculiar to these men of the night.

In their hands might be distinguished some strangely hideous tools. Gueulemer had one of those crooked crow-bars which the prowlers call *fanchons*.

"Ah, there, what are you doing here? what do you want of us? are you crazy?" exclaimed Thenardier, as much as one can exclaim in a whisper. "What do you come and hinder us in our work for?"

Eponine began to laugh and sprang to his neck.

"I am here, my darling father, because I am here. Is there any law against sitting upon the stones in these days? It is you who shouldn't be here. What are you coming here for, since it is a *biscuit*? I told Magnon so. There is nothing to do here. But embrace me now, my dear, good father! What a long time since I have seen you! You are out, then?"

Thenardier tried to free himself from Eponine's arms, and muttered:

"Very well. You have embraced me. Yes, I am out. I am not in. Now, be off."

But Eponine did not loosen her hold and redoubled her caresses.

"My darling father, how did you do it? You must have a good deal of wit to get out of that! Tell me about it. And my mother? Where is my mother? Give me some news of mamma."

Thenardier answered:

"She is well—I don't know—let me alone—I tell you to be off."

"I don't want to go away just now," said Eponine, with the pettishness of a spoiled child; "you send me away

when here it is four months that I haven't seen you, and when I have hardly had time to embrace you."

And she caught her father again by the neck.

"Ah! come, now, this is foolish," said Babet.

"Let us hurry!" said Gueulemer, "the *coqueurs* may come along."

The ventriloquist sang this distich:

"Nous n' sommes pas le jour de l'an,  
A bécoter papa maman." \*

Eponine turned toward the five bandits.

"Why, this is M. Brujon. Good-day, M. Babet. Good-day, M. Claquesous. Don't you remember me, M. Gueulemer? How goes it, Montparnasse?"

"Yes, they recognize you," said Thenardier. "But good-day, good-night, keep off, don't disturb us!"

"It is the hour for foxes and not for pullets," said Montparnasse.

"You see well enough that we are going to *'goupiner incigo*," † added Babet.

Eponine took Montparnasse's hand.

"Take care," said he, "you will cut yourself, I have a *lingre*‡ open."

"My darling Montparnasse," answered Eponine, very gently, "we must have confidence in people. I am my father's daughter, perhaps. M. Babet, M. Gueulemer, it is I who was charged with finding out about this affair."

It is remarkable that Eponine did not speak argot. Since she had known Marius that horrid language had become impossible to her.

She pressed in her little hand, as bony and weak as the hand of a corpse, the great rough fingers of Gueulemer, and continued:

"You know very well that I am not a fool. Ordinarily you believe me. I have done you service on occasion. Well, I have learned all about this; you would expose yourself uselessly, do you see? I swear to you that there is nothing to be done in that house."

"There are lone women," said Gueulemer.

\* " 'Tis not the first of the new year,  
To hug papa and mamma dear."

† To work here.

‡ Knife.

"No. The people have moved away."

"The candles have not, anyhow!" said Babet.

And he showed Eponine, through the tops of the trees, a light which was moving about in the garret of the cottage. It was Toussaint, who had sat up to hang out her clothes to dry.

Eponine made a final effort.

"Well," said she, "they are very poor people, and it is a shanty where there isn't a sou."

"Go to the devil!" cried Thenardier. "When we have turned the house over, and when we have put the cellar at the top and the garret at the bottom, we will tell you what there is inside, and whether it is *balles*, *ronds*, or *broques*." \*

And he pushed her to pass by.

"My good friend, M. Montparnasse," said Eponine, "I beg you, you who are a good boy, don't go in!"

"Take care, you will cut yourself," replied Montparnasse.

Thenardier added with his decisive tone:

"Clear out, *fee*, and let the men do their work."

Eponine let go of Montparnasse's hand, which she had taken again, and said:

"You will go into that house, then?"

"Just a little!" said the ventriloquist, with a sneer.

Then she placed her back against the grating, faced the six bandits who were armed to the teeth, and to whom the night gave faces of demons, and said in a low and firm voice:

"Well, I—I won't have it."

They stopped, astounded. The ventriloquist, however, finished his sneer. She resumed:

"Friends! listen to me. That isn't the thing. Now I speak. In the first place, if you go into the garden, if you touch this grating, I shall cry out, I shall rap on doors, I shall wake everybody up, I shall have all six of you arrested, I shall call the sergents-de-ville."

"She would do it," said Thenardier in a low tone to Brujon and the ventriloquist.

She shook her head and added:

"Beginning with my father!"

Thenardier approached.

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\* Francs, sous, or farthings.



"Not so near, good man!" said she.

He drew back, muttering between his teeth: "Why, what is the matter with her?" and he added:

"Slut!"

She began to laugh in a terrible way.

"As you will, you shall not go in; I am not the daughter of a dog, for I am the daughter of a wolf. There are six of you, what is that to me? You are men. Now, I am a woman. I am not afraid of you, not a bit. I tell you that you shall not go into this house, because it does not please me. If you approach, I shall bark. I told you so, I am the *cab*, I don't care for you. Go your ways, you annoy me. Go where you like, but don't come here, I forbid it! You have knives, I have feet and hands. That makes no difference, come on now!"

She took a step toward the bandits, she was terrible, she began to laugh.

"The devil! I am not afraid. This summer I shall be hungry; this winter I shall be cold. Are they fools, these geese of men, to think that they can make a girl afraid! Of what? afraid! Ah, pshaw, indeed. Because they have hussies of mistresses who hide under the bed when you raise your voice, it won't do here. I—I am not afraid of anything!"

She kept her eye fixed upon Thenardier, and said:

"Not even of you, father!"

Then she went on, casting her ghastly bloodshot eyes over the bandits:

"What is it to me whether somebody picks me up to-morrow on the pavement of the Rue Plumet, beaten to death with a club by my father, or whether they find me in a year in the ditches of St. Cloud, or at the Isle de Cygnes, among the old rotten rubbish and the dead dogs?"

She was obliged to stop; a dry cough seized her, her breath came like a rattle from her narrow and feeble chest.

She resumed:

"I have but to cry out, they come, bang! You are six, but I am everybody."

Thenardier made a movement toward her.

"'Proach not!" cried she.

He stopped and said to her mildly:

"Well, no; I will not approach, but don't speak so loud. Daughter, you want them to hinder us in our work? Still, we must earn our living. Have you no love for your father now?"

"You bother me," said Eponine.

"Still, we must live, we must eat—"

"Die."

Saying which she sat down on the surbase of the grating humming:

"Mon bras si dodu  
Ma jambe bien faite,  
Et le temps per du." \*

She had her elbow on her knee and her chin in her hand, and she was swinging her foot with an air of indifference. Her dress was full of holes and showed her sharp shoulder-blades. The neighboring lamp lit up her profile and her attitude. Nothing could be more resolute or more surprising.

The six assassins, sullen and abashed at being held in check by a girl, went under the protecting shade of the lantern and held counsel, with humiliated and furious shrugs of their shoulders.

She watched them the while with a quiet, yet indomitable air.

"Something is the matter with her," said Babet. "Some reason. Is she in love with the *cab*? But it is a pity to lose it. Two women, an old fellow who lodges in a back yard—there are pretty good curtains at the windows. The old fellow must be a *guinal*.† I think it is a good thing."

"Well, go in the rest of you," exclaimed Montparnasse. "Do the thing. I will stay here with the girl, and if she trips—"

He made the open knife which he had in his hand gleam in the light of the lantern.

Thenardier said not a word and seemed ready for anything.

Brujon, who was something of an oracle, and who had, as we know, "got up the thing," had not yet spoken. He

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\* "So plump is my arm,  
My leg so well formed,  
Yet my time has no charm."

† A Jew.

appeared thoughtful. He had a reputation for recoiling from nothing, and they knew that he had plundered, from sheer bravado, a police station. Moreover, he made verses and songs, which gave him a great authority.

Babet questioned him.

"You don't say anything, Brujon?"

Brujon remained silent a minute longer, then he shook his head in several different ways, and at last decided to speak.

"Here: I met two sparrows fighting this morning; to-night I run against a woman quarreling. All this is bad. Let us go away."

They went away.

As they went Montparnasse murmured:

"No matter, if they had said so I would have made her feel the weight of my hand."

Babet answered:

"Not I. I don't strike a lady."

At the corner of the street they stopped and exchanged this enigmatic dialogue in a smothered voice:

"Where are we going to sleep to-night?"

"Under Pantin." \*

"Have you the key of the grating with you, Thenardier?"

"Humph."

Eponine, who had not taken her eyes off from them, saw them turn back the way they had come. She rose and began to creep along the walls and houses behind them. She followed them as far as the boulevard. There they separated, and she saw these men sink away in the obscurity into which they seemed to melt.

## V

### THINGS OF THE NIGHT

**A**FTER the departure of the bandits the Rue Plumet resumed its quiet night appearance.

What had just taken place in this street would not have astonished a forest. The trees, the copse, the heath, the branches roughly intertangled, the tall grass, have a darkly

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\* Pantin, Paris.



mysterious existence; this wild multitude sees there sudden apparitions of the invisible; there what is below man distinguishes through the dark what is above man; and there in the night meet things unknown by us living men. Nature, bristling and tawny, is startled at certain approaches in which she seems to feel the supernatural. The forces of the shadow know each other and have mysterious balancings among themselves. Teeth and claws dread the intangible. Bloodthirsty brutality, voracious and starving appetites in quest of prey, instincts armed with nails and jaws which find in the belly their origin and their object, behold and snuff with anxiety the impassive spectral figure prowling beneath a shroud, standing in its dim shivering robe and seeming to them to live with a dead and terrible life. These brutalities, which are matter only, confusedly dread having to do with the infinite dark condensed into an unknown being. A black figure barring the passage stops the wild beast short. That which comes from the graveyard intimidates and disconcerts that which comes from the den; the ferocious is afraid of the sinister; wolves recoil before the ghoul.

## VI

MARIUS BECOMES SO REAL AS TO GIVE COSETTE HIS ADDRESS

WHILE this species of dog in human form was mounting guard over the grating, and the six bandits were slinking away before a girl, Marius was with Cosette.

Never had the sky been more studded with stars or more charming, the trees more tremulous, the odor of the shrubs more penetrating; never had the birds gone to sleep in the leaves with a softer sound; never had all the harmonies of the universal serenity better responded to the interior music of love; never had Marius been more enamored, more happy, more in ecstasy. But he had found Cosette sad. Cosette had been weeping. Her eyes were red.

It was the first cloud in this wonderful dream.

Marius' first word was:

"What is the matter?"

And she answered:

"See."

Then she sat down on the seat near the stairs, and as he took his place all trembling beside her, she continued:

"My father told me this morning to hold myself in readiness, that he had business, and that perhaps we should go away."

Marius shuddered from head to foot.

When we are at the end of life, to die means to go away; when we are at the beginning, to go away means to die.

For six weeks Marius, gradually, slowly, by degrees, had been each day taking possession of Cosette. A possession entirely ideal, but thorough. As we have already explained; in the first love, the soul is taken far before the body; afterward the body is taken far before the soul; sometimes the soul is not taken at all; the Faublas and the Prudhommes add: because there is none; but the sarcasm is fortunately a blasphemy. Marius, then, possessed Cosette, as minds possess; but he wrapped her in his whole soul, and clasped her jealously with an incredible conviction. He possessed her smile, her breath, her perfume, the deep radiance of her blue eyes, the softness of her skin when he touched her hand, the charming mark that she had on her neck, all her thoughts. They had agreed never to go to sleep without dreaming of each other, and they had kept their word. He possessed all Cosette's dreams. He beheld untiringly, and he sometimes touched with his breath, the short hairs at the back of her neck, and he declared to himself that there was not one of those little hairs which did not belong to him, Marius. He gazed upon and adored the things which she wore, her knot of ribbon, her gloves, her cuffs, her slippers, as sacred objects of which he was master. He thought that he was lord of those pretty shell combs which she had in her hair, and he said to himself even, dim and confused stammerings of dawning desire, that there was not a thread of her dress, not a mesh in her stockings, not a fold of her corset, which was not his. At Cosette's side, he felt near his wealth, near his property, near his despot, and near his slave. It seemed as if they so mingled their souls that if they had desired to take them back again it would have been impossible to identify them. "This one is mine." "No, it is mine." "I assure you that you are mistaken.

This is really I." "What you take for you is I." Marius was something which was a part of Cosette and Cosette was something which was a part of Marius. Marius felt Cosette living within him. To have Cosette, to possess Cosette, this to him was not separable from breathing. Into the midst of this faith, of this intoxication, of this virginal possession, marvelous and absolute, of this sovereignty, these words: "We are going away," fell all at once, and the sharp voice of reality cried to him: "Cosette is not yours!"

Marius awoke. For six weeks Marius had lived, as we have said, outside of life; this word, going away, brought him roughly back to it.

He could not find a word. She said to him in turn:

"What is the matter?"

He answered so low that Cosette hardly heard him.

"I don't understand what you have said."

She resumed:

"This morning my father told me to arrange all my little affairs and to be ready, that he would give me his clothes to pack, that he was obliged to take a journey, that we were going away, that we must have a large trunk for me and a small one for him, to get all that ready within a week from now, and that we should go, perhaps, to England."

"But it is monstrous!" exclaimed Marius.

It is certain that at that moment, in Marius' mind, no abuse of power, no violence, no abomination of the most cruel tyrants, no action of Busiris, Tiberius, or Henry VIII was equal in ferocity to this: M. Fauchelevent taking his daughter to England with him because he has business there.

He asked in a feeble voice:

"And when should you start?"

"He didn't say when."

"And when should you return?"

"He didn't say when."

Marius arose, and said coldly:

"Cosette, shall you go?"

Cosette turned upon him her beautiful eyes full of anguish, and answered with a sort of bewilderment:

"Where?"



"To England. Shall you go?"

"Why do you speak so to me?"

"I ask if you shall go?"

"What would you have me do?" she said, clasping her hands.

"So you will go?"

"If my father goes."

"So you will go?"

Cosette took Marius' hand and pressed it without answering.

"Very well," said Marius. "Then I shall go elsewhere."

Cosette felt the meaning of this word still more than she understood it. She turned so pale that her face became white in the darkness. She stammered:

"What do you mean?"

Marius looked at her, then slowly raised his eyes toward heaven and answered:

"Nothing."

When his eyes were lowered he saw Cosette smiling upon him. The smile of the woman whom we love has a brilliancy which we can see by night.

"How stupid we are! Marius, I have an idea."

"What?"

"Go if we go! I will tell you where! Come and join me where I am!"

Marius was now a man entirely awakened. He had fallen back into reality. He cried to Cosette:

"Go with you? are you mad? But it takes money, and I have none! Go to England? Why, I owe now, I don't know, more than ten louis to Courfeyrac, one of my friends whom you do not know! Why, I have an old hat which is not worth three francs, I have a coat from which some of the buttons are gone in front, my shirt is all torn, my elbows are out, my boots let in the water; for six weeks I have not thought of it, and I have not told you about it. Cosette! I am a miserable wretch. You only see me at night, and you give me your love; if you should see me by day you would give me a sou! Go to England? Ah! I have not the means to pay for a passport."

He threw himself against a tree which was near by, standing with his arms above his head, his forehead against the bark, feeling neither the tree which was chafing his

skin nor the fever which was hammering his temples, motionless, and ready to fall, like a statue of despair.

He was a long time thus. One might remain through eternity in such abysses. At last he turned. He heard behind him a little stifled sound, soft and sad.

It was Cosette sobbing.

She had been weeping more than two hours while Marius had been thinking.

He came to her, fell on his knees, and, prostrating himself slowly, he took the tip of her foot, which peeped from under her dress, and kissed it.

She allowed it in silence. There are moments when women accept, like a goddess sombre and resigned, the religion of love.

"Do not weep," said he.

She murmured:

"Because I am, perhaps, going away, and you can not come!"

He continued:

"Do you love me?"

She answered him by sobbing out that word of paradise which is never more enrapturing than when it comes through tears:

"I adore you!"

He continued with a tone of voice which was an inexpressible caress:

"Do not weep. Tell me, will you do this for me, not to weep?"

"Do you love me, too?" said she.

He caught her hand.

"Cosette, I have never given my word of honor to anybody, because I stand in awe of my word of honor. I feel that my father is at my side. Now, I give you my most sacred word of honor that, if you go away, I shall die."

There was in the tone with which he pronounced these words a melancholy so solemn and so quiet that Cosette trembled. She felt that chill which is given by a stern and true fact passing over us. From the shock she ceased weeping.

"Now, listen," said he, "do not expect me to-morrow."

"Why not?"

"Do not expect me till the day after to-morrow."

"Oh! why not?"

"You will see."

"A day without seeing you! Why, that is impossible."

"Let us sacrifice one day to gain, perhaps, a whole life."

And Marius added in an undertone and aside:

"He is a man who changes none of his habits and he has never received anybody till evening."

"What man are you speaking of?" inquired Cosette.

"Me? I said nothing."

"What is it you hope for, then?"

"Wait till day after to-morrow."

"You wish it?"

"Yes, Cosette."

She took his head in both her hands, rising on tiptoe to reach his height and striving to see his hope in his eyes.

Marius continued:

"It occurs to me, you must know my address; something may happen, we don't know; I live with that friend named Courfeyrac. Rue de la Verrerie, No. 16."

He put his hand in his pocket, took out a penknife, and wrote with the blade upon the plastering of the wall:

"Sixteen, Rue de la Verrerie."

Cosette, meanwhile, began to look into his eyes again.

"Tell me your idea. Marius, you have an idea. Tell me. Oh! tell me, so that I may pass a good night!"

"My idea is this: that it is impossible that God should wish to separate us. Expect me day after to-morrow."

"What shall I do till then?" said Cosette. "You, you are outdoors, you go, you come! How happy men are. I have to stay alone. Oh! how sad I shall be! What is it you are going to do to-morrow evening, tell me?"

"I shall try a plan."

"Then I will pray God, and I will think of you from now till then, that you may succeed. I will not ask any more questions, since you wish me not to. You are my master. I shall spend my evening to-morrow singing that music of 'Euryanthe' which you love, and which you came to hear one evening behind my shutter. But day after to-morrow you will come early; I shall expect you at night, at nine o'clock precisely. I forewarn you. Oh,



dear! how sad it is that the days are long! You understand—when the clock strikes nine I shall be in the garden.”

“And I, too.”

And without saying it, moved by the same thought, drawn on by those electric currents which put two lovers in continual communication, both intoxicated with pleasure even in their grief, they fell into each other's arms, without perceiving that their lips were joined, while their uplifted eyes, overflowing with ecstasy and full of tears, were fixed upon the stars.

When Marius went out the street was empty. It was the moment when Eponine was following the bandits to the boulevard.

While Marius was thinking with his head against the tree an idea had passed through his mind; an idea, alas! which he himself deemed senseless and impossible. He had formed a desperate resolution.

## VII

### THE OLD HEART AND YOUNG HEART IN PRESENCE

**G**RANDFATHER GILLENORMAND had, at this period, fully completed his ninety-first year. He still lived with Mdle. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6, in that old house which belonged to him. He was, as we remember, one of those antique old men who await death still erect, whom age loads without making them stoop, and whom grief itself does not bend.

Still, for some time, his daughter had said: “My father is failing. He no longer beat the servants; he struck his cane with less animation on the landing of the stairs when Basque was slow in opening the door.” The Revolution of July had hardly exasperated him for six months. He had seen almost tranquilly in the “Moniteur” this coupling of words: “M. Humblot Conté, peer of France.” The fact is, that the old man was filled with dejection. He did not bend, he did not yield; that was no more a part of his physical than of his moral nature; but he felt himself interiorly failing. Four years he had been waiting for Marius with his foot down, that is just the word, in the conviction that that naughty little scapegrace would ring at the door some

day or other; now he had come, in certain gloomy hours, to say to himself that even if Marius should delay, but little longer— It was not death that was insupportable to him; it was the idea that perhaps he should never see Marius again. Never see Marius again—that had not even for an instant entered into his thought until this day; now this idea began to appear to him and it chilled him. Absence, as always happens when feelings are natural and true, had only increased his grandfather's love for the ungrateful child who had gone away like that. It is on December nights with the thermometer at zero that we think most of the sun. M. Gillenormand was, or thought himself, in any event, incapable of taking a step, he the grandfather, toward his grandson. "I would die first," said he. He acknowledged no fault on his part, but he thought of Marius only with a deep tenderness and the mute despair of an old good man who is going away into the darkness.

He was beginning to lose his teeth, which added to his sadness.

M. Gillenormand, without, however, acknowledging it to himself, for he would have been furious and ashamed of it, had never loved a mistress as he loved Marius.

He had had hung in his room at the foot of his bed as the first thing which he wished to see on awaking an old portrait of his other daughter, she who was dead, Mme. Pontmercy, a portrait taken when she was eighteen years old. He looked at this portrait incessantly. He happened one day to say, while looking at it:

"I think it looks like the child."

"Like my sister?" replied Mdlle. Gillenormand. "Why, yes."

The old man added: "And like him also."

Once as he was sitting, his knees pressed together and his eyes almost closed in a posture of dejection, his daughter ventured to say to him:

"Father, are you still so angry with him?"

She stopped, not daring to go further.

"With whom?" asked he.

"With that poor Marius."

He raised his old head, laid his thin and wrinkled fist upon the table, and cried in his most irritated and quivering tone:

"Poor Marius, you say? That gentleman is a rascal, a worthless knave, a little ungrateful vanity, with no heart, no soul, a proud, a wicked man!"

And he turned away that his daughter might not see the tears he had in his eyes.

Three days later, after a silence which had lasted for four hours, he said to his daughter snappishly:

"I have had the honor to beg Mdlle. Gillenormand never to speak to me of him."

Aunt Gillenormand gave up all attempts and came to this profound diagnosis: "My father never loved my sister very much after her folly. It is clear that he detests Marius."

"After her folly" meant after she had married the colonel.

Still, as may have been conjectured, Mdlle. Gillenormand had failed in her attempt to substitute her favorite, the officer of lancers, for Marius. The supplanter Théodule had not succeeded. M. Gillenormand had not accepted the quid-pro-quo. The void in the heart does not accommodate itself to a proxy. Théodule, for his part, even while snuffing the inheritance, revolted at the drudgery of pleasing. The good man wearied the lancer, and the lancer shocked the good man. Lieutenant Théodule was lively doubtless, but a babbler; frivolous but vulgar; a good liver but of bad company; he had mistresses, it is true, and he talked about them a good deal, that is also true; but he talked about them badly. All his qualities had a defect. M. Gillenormand was wearied out with hearing him tell of all the favors that he had won in the neighborhood of his barracks, Rue de Babylone. And then Lieutenant Théodule sometimes came in his uniform with the tri-color cockade. This rendered him altogether insupportable. Grandfather Gillenormand at last said to his daughter: "I have had enough of him, your Théodule. I have little taste for warriors in time of peace. Entertain him yourself if you like. I am not sure, but I like the sabres even better than the trailers of the sabre. The clashing of blades in battle is not so wretched, after all, as the rattling of the sheaths on the pavement. And then to harness himself like a bully and to strap himself up like a flirt, to wear a corset under a cuirass, is to be ridicu-



lous twice over. A genuine man keeps himself at an equal distance from swagger and roguery. Neither hector nor heartless. Keep your Théodule for yourself."

It was of no use for his daughter to say: "Still, he is your grandnephew;" it turned out that M. Gillenormand, who was grandfather to the ends of his nails, was not granduncle at all.

In reality, as he had good judgment and made the comparison, Théodule only served to increase his regret for Marius.

One evening, it was the 4th of June, which did not prevent M. Gillenormand from having a blazing fire in his fireplace, he had said good-night to his daughter, who was sewing in the adjoining room. He was alone in his room with the rural scenery, his feet upon the andirons, half-enveloped in his vast coromandel screen with nine folds, leaning upon his table, on which two candles were burning under green shade, buried in his tapestried arm-chair, a book in his hand but not reading. He was dressed, according to his custom, *en encroyable*, and resembled an antique portrait of Garat. This would have caused him to be followed in the streets, but his daughter always covered him when he went out with a huge bishop's doublet which hid his dress. At home, except in getting up and going to bed, he never wore a dressing-gown. "It gives an old look," said he.

M. Gillenormand thought of Marius lovingly and bitterly; and, as usual, the bitterness predominated. An increase of tenderness always ended by boiling over and turning into indignation. He was at that point where we seek to adopt a course and to accept what rends us. He was just explaining to himself that there was now no longer any reason for Marius to return; that if he had been going to return he would have done so already; that he must give him up. He endeavored to bring himself to the idea that it was over with, and that he would die without seeing "that gentleman" again. But his whole nature revolted; his old paternity could not consent to it. "What?" said he—this was his sorrowful refrain—"he will not come back!" His bald head had fallen upon his breast, and he was vaguely fixing a lamentable and irritated look upon the embers on his hearth.

In the deepest of this reverie his old domestic, Basque, came in and asked:

"Can monsieur receive M. Marius?"

The old man straightened up, pallid and like a corpse which rises under a galvanic shock. All his blood had flown back to his heart. He faltered.

"M. Marius what?"

"I don't know," answered Basque, intimidated and thrown out of countenance by his master's appearance. "I have not seen him. Nicolette just told me: 'There is a young man here, say that it is M. Marius.'"

M. Gillenormand stammered out in a whisper:

"Show him in."

And he remained in the same attitude, his head shaking, his eyes fixed on the door. It opened. A young man entered. It was Marius.

Marius stopped at the door, as if waiting to be asked to come in.

His almost wretched dress was not perceived in the obscurity produced by the green shade. Only his face, calm and grave, but strangely sad, could be distinguished.

M. Gillenormand, as if congested with astonishment and joy, sat for some moments without seeing anything but a light, as when one is in presence of an apparition. He was almost fainting; he perceived Marius through a blinding haze. It was indeed he, it was indeed Marius.

At last! after four years! He seized him, so to speak, all over at a glance. He thought him beautiful, noble, striking, adult, a complete man, with graceful attitude and pleasing air. He would gladly have opened his arms, called him, rushed upon him; his heart melted in rapture, affectionate words welled and overflowed in his breast; indeed, all this tenderness started up and came to his lips, and, through that contrast which was the groundwork of his nature, there came forth a harsh word. He said abruptly:

"What is it you come here for?"

Marius answered with embarrassment:

"Monsieur—"

M. Gillenormand would have had Marius throw himself into his arms. He was displeased with Marius and with himself. He felt that he was rough and that Marius was cold. It was to the good man an insupportable and irri-

tating anguish, to feel himself so tender and so much in tears within, while he could only be harsh without. The bitterness returned. He interrupted Marius with a sharp tone:

"Then what do you come for?"

This then signified: "If you don't come to embrace me." Marius looked at his grandfather, whose pallor had changed to marble.

"Monsieur—"

The old man continued, in a stern voice:

"Do you come to ask my pardon? have you seen your fault?"

He thought to put Marius on the track, and that "the child" was going to bend. Marius shuddered; it was the disavowal of his father which was asked of him; he cast down his eyes and answered:

"No, monsieur."

"And then," exclaimed the old man impetuously, with a grief which was bitter and full of anger, "what do you want with me?"

Marius clasped his hands, took a step, and said in a feeble and trembling voice:

"Monsieur, have pity on me."

This word moved M. Gillenormand; spoken sooner, it would have softened him, but it came too late. The grandfather arose; he supported himself upon his cane with both hands, his lips were white, his forehead quivered, but his tall stature commanded the stooping Marius.

"Pity on you, monsieur! The youth asks pity from the old man of 91! You are entering life, I am leaving it; you go to the theatre, the ball, the café, the billiard-room; you have wit, you please the women, you are a handsome fellow, while I can not leave my chimney-corner in mid-summer; you are rich, with the only riches there are, while I have all the poverties of old age; infirmity, isolation! You have your thirty-two teeth, a good stomach, a keen eye, strength, appetite, health, cheerfulness, a forest of black hair, while I have not even white hair left; I have lost my teeth, I am losing my legs, I am losing my memory; there are three names of streets which I am always confounding, the Rue Charlot, the Rue du Chaume, and the Rue St. Claude; there is where I am; you have the



whole future before you full of sunshine, while I am beginning not to see another drop of it, so deep am I getting into the night; you are in love, of course. I am not loved by anybody in the world; and you ask pity of me. Zounds! Molière forgot this. If that is the way you jest at the Palais, messieurs, lawyers, I offer you my sincere compliments. You are funny fellows."

And the octogenarian resumed in an angry and stern voice: "Come, now, what do you want of me?"

"Monsieur," said Marius, "I know that my presence is displeasing to you, but I come only to ask one thing of you, and then I will go away immediately."

"You are a fool!" said the old man. "Who tells you to go away?"

This was the translation of those loving words which he had deep in his heart: "Come, ask my pardon, now! Throw yourself on my neck!" M. Gillenormand felt that Marius was going to leave him in a few moments, that his unkind reception repelled him, that his harshness was driving him away; he said all this to himself, and his anguish increased; and as his anguish immediately turned into anger, his harshness augmented. He would have had Marius comprehend, and Marius did not comprehend; which rendered the good man furious. He continued:

"What! you have left me! me, your grandfather; you have left my house to go nobody knows where; you have afflicted your aunt; you have been, that is clear, it is more pleasant, leading the life of a bachelor, playing the elegant, going home at all hours, amusing yourself; you have not given me a sign of life; you have contracted debts without even telling me to pay them; you have made yourself a breaker of windows and a rioter, and, at the end of four years, you come to my house and have nothing to say but that!"

This violent method of pushing the grandson to tenderness produced only silence on the part of Marius. M. Gillenormand folded his arms, a posture which with him was particularly imperious, and apostrophized Marius bitterly.

"Let us make an end of it. You have come to ask something of me, say you? Well, what? what is it? speak!"

"Monsieur," said Marius, with the look of a man who feels that he is about to fall into an abyss, "I come to ask your permission to marry."

M. Gillenormand rang. Basque half-opened the door. "Send my daughter in."

A second later the door opened again. Mdlle. Gillenormand did not come in, but showed herself. Marius was standing, mute, his arms hanging down, with the look of a criminal. M. Gillenormand was coming and going up and down the room. He turned toward his daughter and said to her:

"Nothing. It is M. Marius. Bid him good-evening. Monsieur wishes to marry. That is all. Go."

The crisp, harsh tones of the old man's voice announced a strange fulness of feeling. The aunt looked at Marius with a bewildered air, appeared hardly to recognize him, allowed neither a motion nor a syllable to escape her, and disappeared at a breath from her father quicker than a dry leaf before a hurricane.

Meanwhile Grandfather Gillenormand had returned and stood with his back to the fireplace.

"You marry! at 21! You have arranged that! You have nothing but a permission to ask! a formality. Sit down, monsieur. Well, you have had a revolution since I had the honor to see you. The Jacobins have had the upper hand. You ought to be satisfied. You are a Republican, are you not, since you are a baron? You arrange that. The Republic is sauce to the barony. Are you decorated by July? did you take a bit of the Louvre, monsieur! There is close by here, in the Rue St. Antoine, opposite the Rue des Nonaindières, a ball incrustated in the wall of the third story of a house with this inscription: 'July 28, 1830.' Go and see that. That produces a good effect. Ah! Pretty things those friends of yours do. By the way, are they not making a fountain in the square of the monument of M. the Duke de Berry? So you want to marry? Whom? Can the question be asked without indiscretion?"

He stopped, and, before Marius had had time to answer, he added violently:

"Come, now, you have a business? your fortune made? how much do you earn at your lawyer's trade?"

"Nothing," said Marius, with a firmness and resolution which were almost savage.

"Nothing? you have nothing to live on but the 1,200 livres which I send you?"

Marius made no answer. M. Gillenormand continued:

"Then I understand the girl is rich?"

"As I am."

"What, no dowry?"

"No."

"Some expectations?"

"I believe not."

"With nothing to her back! and what is the father?"

"I do not know."

"What is her name?"

"Mdlle. Fauchelevent."

"Fauchewhat?"

"Fauchelevent."

"Pttt!" said the old man.

"Monsieur!" exclaimed Marius.

M. Gillenormand interrupted him with the tone of a man who is talking to himself.

"That is it, 21, no business, 1,200 livres a year, Mme. the Baroness Pontmercy will go to market to buy two sous' worth of parsley."

"Monsieur," said Marius, in the desperation of the last vanishing hope, "I supplicate you! I conjure you, in the name of Heaven, with clasped hands, monsieur, I throw myself at your feet, allow me to marry her!"

The old man burst into a shrill, dreary laugh, through which he coughed and spoke.

"Ha, ha, ha! you said to yourself: 'The devil, I will go and find that old wig, that silly dolt! What a pity that I am not 25! how I would toss him a good respectful notice! how I would give him the go-by. Never mind, I will say to him: "Old idiot, you are too happy to see me, I desire to marry, I desire to espouse mamselle no matter whom, daughter of monsieur no matter what; I have no shoes, she has no chemise, all right; I desire to throw to the dogs my career, my future, my youth, my life; I desire to make a plunge into misery with a wife at my neck; that is my idea, you must consent to it! and the old fossil will consent."' Go, my boy, as you like, tie your stone to



yourself, espouse your Poussévent, your Coupevent—never, monsieur! never!”

“Father!”

“Never!”

At the tone in which this “never” was pronounced Marius lost all hope. He walked the room with slow steps, his head bowed down, tottering, more like a man who is dying than like one who is going away. M. Gillenormand followed him with his eyes, and, at the moment the door opened and Marius was going out, he took four steps with the senile vivacity of impetuous and self-willed old men, seized Marius by the collar, drew him back forcibly into the room, threw him into an armchair, and said to him:

“Tell me about it!”

It was that single word “father,” dropped by Marius, which had caused this revolution.

Marius looked at him in bewilderment. The changing countenance of M. Gillenormand expressed nothing now but a rough and ineffable good nature. The guardian had given place to the grandfather.

“Come, let us see, speak, tell me about your love scrapes, jabber, tell me all! Lord! how foolish these young folks are!”

“Father,” resumed Marius—

The old man’s whole face shone with an unspeakable radiance.

“Yes! that is it! call me father, and you shall see!”

There was now something so kind, so sweet, so open, so paternal in this abruptness, that Marius in this sudden passage from discouragement to hope, was, as it were, intoxicated, stupefied. He was sitting near the table, the light of the candles made the wretchedness of his dress apparent, and the grandfather gazed at him in astonishment.

“Well, father,” said Marius—

“Come, now,” interrupted M. Gillenormand, “then you really haven’t a sou? you are dressed like a robber.”

He fumbled in a drawer and took out a purse, which he laid upon the table:

“Here, there is one hundred louis, buy yourself a hat.”

“Father,” pursued Marius, “my good father, if you knew. I love her. You don’t realize it; the first time I

saw her was at the Luxembourg, she came there; in the beginning I did not pay much attention to her, and then I do not know how it came about. I fell in love with her. Oh! how wretched it has made me! Now, at last, I see her every day, at her own house; her father does not know it; only think that they are going away; we see each other in the garden in the evening; her father wants to take her to England; then I said to myself; 'I will go and see my grandfather and tell him about it. I should go crazy in the first place, I should die, I should make myself sick, I should throw myself into the river. I must marry her because I should go crazy.' Now, that is the whole truth, I do not believe that I have forgotten anything. She lives in a garden where there is a railing, in the Rue Plumet. It is near the Invalides."

Grandfather Gillenormand, radiant with joy, had sat down by Marius' side. While listening to him and enjoying the sound of his voice, he enjoyed at the same time a long pinch of snuff. At that word, Rue Plumet, he checked his inspiration and let the rest of his snuff fall on his knees.

"Rue Plumet! you say Rue Plumet? Let us see now! Are there not some barracks down there? Why, yes, that is it. Your cousin Théodule has told me about her. The lancer, the officer. A lassie, my good friend, a lassie. Lord, yes, Rue Plumet. That is what used to be called Rue Blomet. It comes back to me now. I have heard tell about this little girl of the grating in the Rue Plumet. In a garden, a Pamela. Your taste is not bad. They say she is nice. Between ourselves, I believe that ninny of a lancer has paid his court to her a little. I do not know how far it went. After all, that does not amount to anything. And then, we must not believe him. He is a boaster. Marius! I think it is very well for a young man like you to be in love. It belongs to your age. I like you better in love than as a Jacobin. I like you better taken by a petticoat, Lord! by twenty petticoats, than by M. de Robespierre. For my part, I do myself this justice that, in the matter of *sansculottes*, I have never liked anything but women. Pretty women are pretty women—the devil! there is no objection to that. As to the little girl, she receives you unknown to papa. That

is all right. I have had adventures like that myself. More than one. Do you know how we do? we don't take the thing ferociously; we don't rush into the tragic; we don't conclude with marriage and with M. l'Mayor and his scarf. We are altogether a shrewd fellow. We have good sense. Slip over it, mortals, don't marry. We come and find grandfather, who is a good man at heart, and who almost always has a few rolls of louis in an old drawer; we must say to him: 'Grandfather, that's how it is.' And grandfather says: 'That is all natural. Youth must fare and old age must wear. I have been young, you will be old. Go on, my boy, you will repay this to your grandson. There are two hundred pistoles. Amuse yourself roundly! Nothing better! that is the way the thing should be done. We don't marry, but that doesn't hinder. You understand me?' "

Marius, petrified and unable to articulate a word, shook his head.

The good man burst into a laugh, winked his old eye, gave him a tap on the knee, looked straight into his eyes with a significant and sparkling expression, and said to him with the most amorous shrug of the shoulders:

"Stupid! make her your mistress."

Marius turned pale. He had understood nothing of all that his grandfather had been saying. This rigmarole of Rue Blomet, of Pamela, of barracks, of a lancer, had passed before Marius like a phantasmagoria. Nothing of all that could relate to Cosette, who was a lily. The good man was wandering. But this wandering had terminated in a word which Marius did understand and which was a deadly insult to Cosette. That phrase, "make her your mistress," entered the heart of the chaste young man like a sword.

He rose, picked up his hat which was on the floor, and walked toward the door with a firm and assured step. There he turned, bowed profoundly before his grandfather, raised his head again and said:

"Five years ago you outraged my father; to-day you have outraged my wife. I ask nothing more of you, monsieur. Adieu."

Grandfather Gillenormand, astounded, opened his mouth, stretched out his arms, attempted to rise, but be-



fore he could utter a word the door closed and Marius had disappeared.

The old man was for a few moments motionless, and, as it were, thunderstricken, unable to speak or breathe, as if a hand were clutching his throat. At last he tore himself from his chair, ran to the door as fast as a man who is ninety-one can run, opened it and cried:

"Help! help!"

His daughter appeared, then the servants. He continued with a pitiful rattle in his voice:

"Run after him! catch him! what have I done to him! he is mad! he is going away! Oh! my God, oh, my God! this time he will not come back!"

He went to the window which looked upon the street, opened it with his tremulous old hands, hung more than half his body outside, while Basque and Nicolette held him from behind, and cried:

"Marius! Marius! Marius! Marius!"

But Marius was already out of hearing and was at that very moment turning the corner of the Rue St. Louis.

The octogenarian carried his hands to his temples two or three times, with an expression of anguish, drew back tottering and sank into an armchair, pulseless, voiceless, tearless, shaking his head and moving his lips with a stupid air, having now nothing in his eyes or in his heart but something deep and mournful, which resembled night.

## BOOK NINTH—WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

### I

JEAN VALJEAN

**T**HAT very day, toward four o'clock in the afternoon, Jean Valjean was sitting alone upon the reverse of one of the most solitary embankments of the Champ de Mars. Whether from prudence, or from a desire for meditation, or simply as a result of one of those insensible changes of habits which creep little by little into all lives, he now rarely went out with Cosette. He wore his workman's waistcoat, brown linen trousers, and his cap with the long visor hid his face. He was now calm and happy in

regard to Cosette; what had for some time alarmed and disturbed him was dissipated; but within a week or two anxieties of a different nature had come upon him. One day, when walking on the boulevard, he had seen Thenardier; thanks to his disguise, Thenardier had not recognized him, but since then Jean Valjean had seen him again several times, and he was now certain that Thenardier was prowling about the quartier. This was sufficient to make him take a serious step. Thenardier there! this was all dangers at once. Moreover, Paris was not quiet; the political troubles had this inconvenience for him who had anything in his life to conceal, that the police had become very active, and very secret, and that in seeking to track out a man like P  pin or Morey they would be very likely to discover a man like Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean had decided to leave Paris, and even France, and to pass over to England. He had told Cosette. In less than a week he wished to be gone. He was sitting on the embankment in the Champ de Mars, revolving all manner of thoughts in his mind: Thenardier, the police, the journey, and the difficulty of procuring a passport.

On all these points he was anxious.

Finally, an inexplicable circumstance which had just burst upon him, and with which he was still warm, had added to his alarm. On the morning of that very day, being the only one up in the house, and walking in the garden before Cosette's shutters were open, he had suddenly come upon this line scratched upon the wall, probably with a nail:

"Sixteen, *Rue de la Verrerie*."

It was quite recent, the lines were white in the old black mortar, a tuft of nettles at the foot of the wall was powdered with fresh fine plaster. It had probably been written during the night. What was it? an address? a signal for others? a warning for him? At all events, it was evident that the garden had been violated, and that some person unknown had penetrated into it. He recalled the strange incidents which had already alarmed the house. His mind worked upon this canvass. He took good care not to speak to Cosette of the line written on the wall, for fear of frightening her.

In the midst of these meditations he perceived, by a

shadow which the sun projected, that somebody had just stopped upon the crest of the embankment immediately behind him. He was about to turn round, when a folded paper fell upon his knees, as if a hand had dropped it from above his head. He took the paper, unfolded it, and read on it this word, written in large letters with a pencil: "Remove."

Jean Valjean rose hastily; there was no longer anybody on the embankment; he looked about him, and perceived a species of being larger than a child, smaller than a man, dressed in a gray blouse and trousers of dirt-colored cotton velvet, which jumped over the parapet and let itself slide into the ditch of the Champ de Mars.

Jean Valjean returned home immediately, full of thought.

## II

### MARIUS

**M**ARIUS had left M. Gillenormand's desolate. He had entered with a very small hope; he came out with an immense despair.

Still, and those who have observed the beginnings of the human heart will understand it, the lancer, the officer, the ninny, the cousin Théodule, had left no shadow in his mind. Not the slightest. The dramatic poet might apparently hope for some complications from this revelation, made in the very teeth of the grandson by the grandfather. But what the drama would gain the truth would lose. Marius was at that age when we believe no ill; later comes the age when we believe all. Suspicions are nothing more or less than wrinkles. Early youth has none. What overwhelms Othello glides over Candide. Suspect Cosette! There are a multitude of crimes which Marius could have more easily committed.

He began to walk the streets, the resource of those who suffer. He thought of nothing which he could ever remember. At two o'clock in the morning he returned to Courfeyrac's, and threw himself, dressed as he was, upon his mattress. It was broad sunlight when he fell asleep, with that frightful, heavy slumber in which the ideas come and go in the brain. When he awoke, he saw standing



in the room, their hats upon their heads, all ready to go out, and very busy, Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Feuilly, and Combeferre.

Courfeyrac said to him:

"Are you going to the funeral of General Lamarque?"

It seemed to him that Courfeyrac was speaking Chinese.

He went out some time after them. He put into his pocket the pistols which Javert had confided to him at the time of the adventure of the 3d of February, and which had remained in his hands. These pistols were still loaded. It would be difficult to say what obscure thought he had in his mind in taking them with him.

He rambled about all day without knowing where; it rained at intervals, he did not perceive it; for his dinner he bought a penny roll at a baker's, put it in his pocket, and forgot it. It would appear that he took a bath in the Seine without being conscious of it. There are moments when a man has a furnace in his brain. Marius was in one of those moments. He hoped nothing more, he feared nothing more; he had reached this condition since the evening before. He waited for night with feverish impatience, he had but one clear idea; that was, that at nine o'clock he should see Cosette. This last happiness was now his whole future; afterward, darkness. At intervals, while walking along the most deserted boulevards, he seemed to hear strange sounds in Paris. He roused himself from his reverie, and said: "Are they fighting?"

At nightfall, at precisely nine o'clock, as he had promised Cosette, he was in the Rue Plumet. When he approached the grating he forgot everything else. It was forty-eight hours since he had seen Cosette; he was going to see her again; every other thought faded away and he felt now only a deep and wonderful joy. Those minutes in which we live centuries always have this sovereign and wonderful peculiarity, that for the moment while they are passing they entirely fill the heart.

Marius displaced the grating and sprang into the garden. Cosette was not at the place where she usually waited for him. He crossed the thicket and went to the recess near the steps. "She is waiting for me there," said he. Cosette was not there. He raised his eyes and saw that the shutters of the house were closed. He took a turn

around the garden, the garden was deserted. Then he returned to the house, and, mad with love, intoxicated, dismayed, exasperated with grief and anxiety, like a master who returns home in an untoward hour, he rapped on the shutters. He rapped, he rapped again, at the risk of seeing the window open and the forbidding face of the father appear and ask him: "What do you want?" This was nothing compared with what he now began to see. When he had rapped he raised his voice and called "Cosette!" "Cosette!" cried he. "Cosette!" repeated he, imperiously. There was no answer. It was settled. Nobody in the garden; nobody in the house.

Marius fixed his despairing eyes upon that dismal house, as black, as silent and more empty than a tomb. He looked at the stone seat where he had passed so many adorable hours with Cosette. Then he sat down upon the steps, his heart full of tenderness and resolution; he blessed his love in the depths of his thoughts and he said to himself that since Cosette was gone there was nothing more for him but to die.

Suddenly he heard a voice which appeared to come from the street and which cried through the trees:

"M. Marius!"

He arose.

"Hey?" said he.

"M. Marius, is it you?"

"Yes."

"M. Marius," added the voice, "your friends are expecting you at the barricade, in the Rue de la Chanvrière."

This voice was not entirely unknown to him. It resembled the harsh and roughened voice of Eponine. Marius ran to the grating, pushed aside the movable bar, passed his head through and saw somebody, who appeared to him to be a young man, rapidly disappearing in the twilight.

## III

M. MABEUF

**J**EAN VALJEAN'S purse was useless to M. Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf, in his venerable child-like austerity, had not accepted the gift of the stars; he did not admit that a star could coin itself into gold louis. He did not guess that what fell from the sky came from Gavroche. He carried the purse to the commissary of police of the quartier, as a lost article, placed by the finder at the disposition of the claimants. The purse was lost, in fact. We need not say that nobody reclaimed it and it did not help M. Mabeuf.

For the rest, M. Mabeuf had continued to descend.

The experiments upon the indigo had succeeded no better at the Jarden des Plantes than in his garden at Austerlitz. The year before he owed his housekeeper her wages; now, we have seen, he owed three-quarters of his rent. The pawnbroker, at the expiration of thirteen months, had sold the plates of his "Flora." Some coppersmith had made saucepans of them. His plates gone, being no longer able even to complete the broken sets of his "Flora," which he still possessed, he had given up engravings and text at a wretched price to a second-hand bookseller, as "odd copies." He had now nothing left of the work of his whole life. He began to eat up the money from these copies. When he saw that this slender resource was failing him, he renounced his garden and left it uncultivated. Before this and for a long time before, he had given up the two eggs and the bit of beef which he used to eat from time to time. He dined on bread and potatoes. He had sold his last furniture, then all his spare bedding and clothing, then his collection of plants and his pictures; but he still had his most precious books, several of which were of great rarity, among others "Les Quadrins Historiques de la Bible," edition of 1560; "La Concordance des Bibles" of Pierre de Besse; "Les Marguerites de la Marguerite" of Jean de la Haye, with a dedication to the Queen of Navarre; the book "On the Charge and Dignity of the Ambassador," by the Sieur de



Villiers Hotman; a "Florilegium Rabbinicum," of 1644; a "Tibullus," of 1567, with this splendid inscription: "Vernetiis, in ædibus Manutianis"; finally a "Diogenes Laertius," printed at Lyons in 1644, containing the famous variations in the manuscript 411, of the thirteenth century, in the Vatican, and those of the two manuscripts of Venice, 393 and 394, so fruitfully consulted by Henry Estienne, and all the passages in the Doric dialect which are found only in the celebrated manuscripts of the twelfth century of the library of Naples. M. Mabeuf never made a fire in his room, and went to bed by daylight so as not to burn a candle. It seemed that he had now no neighbors; he was shunned when he went out; he was aware of it. The misery of a child is interesting to a mother, the misery of a young man is interesting to a young woman, the misery of an old man is interesting to nobody. This is of all miseries the coldest. Still Father Mabeuf had not entirely lost his child-like serenity. His eye regained some vivacity when it was fixed upon his books, and he smiled when he thought of the "Diogenes Laertius," which was a unique copy. His glass bookcase was the only piece of furniture which he had preserved beyond what was indispensable.

One day Mother Plutarch said to him:

"I have nothing to buy the dinner with."

What she called the dinner was a loaf of bread and four or five potatoes.

"On credit," said M. Mabeuf.

"You know well enough that they refuse me."

M. Mabeuf opened his library, looked long at all his books one after another, as a father, compelled to decimate his children, would look at them before choosing, then took one of them hastily, put it under his arm and went out. He returned two hours afterward with nothing under his arm, laid thirty sous on the table, and said:

"You will get some dinner."

From that moment Mother Plutarch saw settling over the old man's white face a dark veil which was never lifted again.

The next day, the day after, every day, he had to begin again. M. Mabeuf went out with a book and came back with a piece of money. As the book-stall keepers saw

that he was forced to sell, they bought from him for twenty sous what he had paid twenty francs for, sometimes to the same booksellers. Volume by volume, the whole library passed away. He said at times: "I am eighty years old, however," as if he had some lingering hope of reaching the end of his days before reaching the end of his books. His sadness increased. Once, however, he had a pleasure. He went out with a "Robert Estienne," which he sold for thirty-five sous on the Quai Malaquais, and returned with an "Aldine," which he had bought for forty sous in the Rue des Gres. "I owe five sous," said he to Mother Plutarch, glowing with joy.

That day he did not dine.

He belonged to the Society of Horticulture. His poverty was known there. The president of this society came to see him, promised to speak to the minister of agriculture and commerce about him and did so. "Why, how now!" exclaimed the minister. "I do believe. An old philosopher! A botanist! An inoffensive man! We must do something for him!" The next day M. Mabeuf received an invitation to dine at the minister's. Trembling with joy he showed the letter to Mother Plutarch. "We are saved!" said he. On the appointed day he went to the minister's. He perceived that his ragged cravat, his large, old, square coat, and his shoes polished with egg, astonished the ushers. Nobody spoke to him, not even the minister. About ten o'clock in the evening, as he was still expecting a word, he heard the minister's wife, a beautiful lady in a low-necked dress, whom he had not dared to approach, asking: "What can that old gentleman be?" He returned home on foot at midnight in a driving rain. He had sold an "Elzevir" to pay for a fiacre to go with.

He had acquired the habit, every evening before going to bed, of reading a few pages in his "Diogenes Laertius." He knew Greek well enough to enjoy the peculiarities of the text which he possessed. He had now no other joy. Some weeks rolled by. Suddenly Mother Plutarch fell sick. There is one thing sadder than having nothing with which to buy bread from the baker; that is, having nothing with which to buy drugs from the apothecary. One night, the doctor had ordered a very dear potion. And

then, the sickness was growing worse, a nurse was needed. M. Mabeuf opened his bookcase; there was nothing more there. The last volume had gone. The "Diogenes Laërtius" alone remained.

He put the unique copy under his arm and went out; it was the 4th of June, 1832; he went to the Porte St. Jacques, to Royol's Successor's, and returned with one hundred francs. He laid the pile of five-franc pieces on the old servant's bedroom table and went back to his room without saying a word.

The next day, by dawn, he was seated on the stone post in the garden, and he might have been seen from over the hedge all the morning motionless, his head bowed down, his eye vaguely fixed upon the withered beds. At intervals he wept; the old man did not seem to perceive it. In the afternoon, extraordinary sounds broke out in Paris. They resembled musket shots and the clamor of a multitude.

Father Mabeuf raised his head. He saw a gardener going by and asked:

"What is that?"

The gardener answered, his spade upon his shoulder, and in the most quiet tone:

"It's the émeutes."

"What! émeutes?"

"Yes. They are fighting."

"What are they fighting for?"

"Oh! Lordy!" said the gardener.

"Whereabouts?" continued M. Mabeuf.

"Near the arsenal."

Father Mabeuf went into the house, took his hat, looked mechanically for a book to put under his arm, did not find any, said: "Ah! it is true!" and went away with a bewildered air.

## BOOK TENTH—JUNE 5, 1832

### THE SURFACE OF THE QUESTION

OF what is the émeute composed? Of nothing and of everything. Of an electricity gradually evolved, of a flame suddenly leaping forth, of a wandering force, of a passing wind. This wind meets talking tongues, dream-



ing brains, suffering souls, burning passions, howling miseries, and sweeps them away.

Whither?

At hazard. Across the state, across the laws, across the prosperity and the insolence of others.

Irritated convictions, eager enthusiasms, excited indignations, the repressed instincts of war, exalted young courage, noble impulses; curiosity, the taste for change, the thirst for the unexpected, that sentiment which gives us pleasure in reading the bill of a new play, and which makes the ringing of the prompter's bell at the theatre a welcome sound; vague hatreds, spites, disappointments, every vanity which believes that destiny has caused it to fail; discomforts, empty dreams, ambitions shut in by high walls, whoever hopes for an issue from a downfall; finally, at the very bottom, the mob, that mud which takes fire, such are the elements of the *émeute*.

Whatever is greatest and whatever is most infamous; the beings who prowl about outside of everything, awaiting an opportunity, bohemians, people without occupation, loafers about the street-corners, those who sleep at night in a desert of houses, with no other roof than the cold clouds of the sky, those who ask their bread each day from chance and not from labor, the unknown ones of misery and nothingness, the bare arms, the bare feet, belong to the *émeute*.

Whoever feels in his soul a secret revolt against any act whatever of the state, of life, or of fate, borders on the *émeute*, and, so soon as it appears, begins to shiver and to feel himself uplifted by the whirlwind.

The *émeute* is a sort of water-spout in the social atmosphere which suddenly takes form in certain conditions of temperature, and which, in its whirling, mounts, runs, thunders, tears up, raises, crushes, demolishes, uproots, dragging with it the grand natures and the paltry, the strong man and the feeble mind, the trunk of the tree and the blade of straw.

Woe to him whom it sweeps away, as well as to him whom it comes to smite! It breaks them one against the other.

It communicates to those whom it seizes a mysterious and extraordinary power. It fills the first comer with the

force of events; it makes projectiles of everything. It makes a bullet of a pebble and a general of a street porter.

If we may believe certain oracles of crafty politics, from the governmental point of view, something of the *émeute* is desirable. System: the *émeute* strengthens those governments which it does not overthrow. It tests the army, it concentrates the bourgeoisie; it calls out the muscles of the police; it determines the strength of the social frame. It is a gymnastic training; it is almost hygienic. Power is healthier after an *émeute*, as a man is after a rubbing.

The *émeute*, thirty years ago, was looked upon from still other points of view.

There is a theory for everything which proclaims itself "common sense"; Philinte against Alceste; mediation offered between the true and the false; explanation, admonition, a somewhat haughty extenuation which, because it is a mixture of blame and excuse, thinks itself wisdom, and is often only pedantry. An entire political school, called the compromise school, has sprung from this. Between cold water and warm water, this is the party of tepid water. This school, with its pretended depth, wholly superficial, which dissects effects, without going back to the causes, from the height of a half-science, chides the agitations of the public square.

To hear this school: "The *émeutes* with which the achievement of 1830 was complicated, robbed that great event of a portion of its purity. The Revolution of July had been a fine breeze of the popular wind, quickly followed by blue sky. They brought back the cloudy sky; they degraded that Revolution, at first so remarkable for unanimity, into a quarrel. In the Revolution of July, as in all sudden progress, there were some secret fractures; the *émeute* rendered them sensible. We might say: 'Ah! this is broken.' After the Revolution of July the deliverance only was felt; after the *émeutes* the catastrophe was felt.

"Every *émeute* closes the shops, depresses the funds, terrifies the stock-board, suspends commerce, shackles business, precipitates failures; no more money, private fortunes shaken, the public credit disturbed, manufactures disconcerted, capital hoarded, labor depreciated, fear everywhere; reactions in all the cities. Hence yawning

gulfs. It has been calculated that the first day of an émeute costs France 20,000,000 francs, the second 40,000,000 francs, the third 60,000,000 francs. An émeute of three days costs 120,000,000 francs, that is to say, looking only at the financial result, is equivalent to a disaster, a shipwreck, or the loss of a battle, which should annihilate a fleet of sixty vessels of the line.

"Beyond a doubt, historically, émeutes had their beauty; the war of the pavements is no less grand and no less pathetic than the war of the thickets; in the one there is the soul of forests, in the other the heart of cities; one has Jean Chouan; the other has Jeanne. The émeutes illuminated, with red light, but splendidly, all the most original outgrowths of the Parisian character, generosity, devotion, stormy gayety, students proving that bravery is part of intelligence, the national guard unwavering, bivouacs of shopkeepers, fortresses of *gamins*, scorn of death among the people on the street. Schools and legions came in conflict. After all, between the combatants, there was only a difference of age; they were the same race; they are the same stoical men who die at 20 for their ideas, at 40 for their families. The army, always sad in civil wars, opposed prudence to audacity. The émeutes, at the same time that they manifested the intrepidity of the people, effected the education of the courage of the bourgeois.

"Very well. But is it worth all the blood shed? And to the bloodshed add the future darkened, progress incriminated, anxiety among the best men, noble liberals despairing, foreign absolutism delighted with these wounds inflicted on the Revolution by itself, the vanquished of 1830 triumphing and saying: 'We told you so!' Add Paris enlarged, perhaps, but France surely diminished. Add, for we must tell all, the massacres which too often dishonored the victory of order grown ferocious over liberty grown mad. Taken altogether, émeutes have been disastrous."

Thus speaks this almost wisdom with which the bourgeoisie, that almost people, so gladly contents itself.

As for us, we reject this too broad and consequently too convenient word émeute. Between a popular movement and a popular movement we make a distinction. We do not ask whether an émeute cost as much as a battle. In the first place wherefore a battle? Here arises the ques-



tion of war. Is war less a scourge than the émeute a calamity? And then, are all émeutes calamities? And what if the 14th of July did cost 12,000,000 francs? The establishment of Philip V in Spain cost France 2,000,000,000 francs. Even at the same price we should prefer the 14th of July. Moreover, we put aside these figures, which seem to be reasons, and which are only words. An émeute given, we examine it in itself. In all that is said by the theoretic objection above set forth only the effect is in question, we seek for the cause.

We specify.

## II

### THE BOTTOM OF THE QUESTION

**T**HERE is the émeute, there is the insurrection; they are two angers; one is wrong; the other is right. In democratic states, the only governments founded in justice, it sometimes happens that a fraction usurps; then the whole rises up, and the necessary vindication of its right may go so far as to take up arms. In all questions which spring from the collective sovereignty, the war of the whole against the fraction is insurrection; the attack of the fraction against the whole is an émeute; according as the Tuileries contain the king or contain the convention, they are justly or unjustly attacked. The same cannon pointed against the multitude is wrong the 10th of August and right the 14th of Vendémiaire. Similar in appearance, different at the bottom; the Swiss defend the false, Bonaparte defends the true. What universal suffrage has done in its freedom and its sovereignty can not be undone by the street. So, in the affairs of pure civilization; the instinct of the masses, yesterday clear sighted, may to-morrow be clouded. The same fury is lawful against Terray and absurd against Turgot. The breaking of machines, the pillaging of storehouses, the tearing up of rails, the demolition of docks, the false means of the multitudes, the denials of justice by the people to progress, Ramus assassinated by the students, Rousseau driven out of Switzerland with stones, is the émeute. Israel against Moses, Athens against Phocion, Rome against Scipio is the émeute; Paris against the Bastille is insurrection. The

soldiers against Alexander, the sailors against Christopher Columbus, this is the same revolt; an impious revolt; why? Because Alexander does for Asia with the sword what Christopher Columbus does for America with the compass; Alexander, like Columbus, finds a world. These gifts of a world to civilization are such extensions of light that all resistance to them is criminal. Sometimes the people counterfeits fidelity to itself. The mob is traitor to the people. Is there, for instance, anything more strange than that long and bloody protest of the contraband salt-makers, a legitimate chronic revolt, which, at the decisive moment, on the day of safety, at the hour of the people's victory, espouses the throne, turns Chouan, and from insurrection against makes itself an émeute for! Dreary masterpieces of ignorance! The contraband salt-maker escapes the royal gallows, and, with a bit of rope at his neck, mounts the white cockade. Death to the excise gives birth to *Vive le Roi*. St. Bartholomew assassins, September murderers, Avignon massacres, assassins of Coligny, assassins of Mme. de Lambelle, assassins of Brune, Miquelets, Verdets, Cadenettes, companions of Jehu, Chevaliers du Brassard, such is émeute. La Vendée is a great catholic émeute. The sound of the advancing right knows itself; it does not always get clear of the quaking of the overthrown masses; there are foolish rages, there are cracked bells; every tocsin does not ring with the ring of bronze. The clash of passions and of ignorances is different from the shock of progress. Rise if you will, but to grow. Show me to which side you are going. There is no insurrection but forward. Every other rising is evil; every violent step backward is an émeute; to retreat is an act of violence against the human race. Insurrection is the truth's access of fury; the paving-stones which insurrection tears up throw off the spark of right. These stones leave to the émeute only their mud. Danton against Louis XVI is insurrection, Hébert against Danton is émeute.

Hence it is that, if insurrection, in given cases, may be, as Lafayette said, the most sacred of duties, an émeute may be the most deadly of crimes.

There is also some difference in the intensity of caloric; the insurrection is often a volcano, the émeute is often a fire of straw.

The revolt, as we have said, is sometimes on the part of power. Polignac is an émeuter; Camille Desmoulins is a governor.

Sometimes insurrection is resurrection.

The solution of everything by universal suffrage being a fact entirely modern, and all history anterior to that fact being for 4,000 years filled with violated right and the suffering of the people, each period of history brings with it such protest as is possible to it. Under the Cæsars there was no insurrection, but there was Juvenal.

The *facit indignatio* replaces the Gracchi.

Under the Cæsars there is the exile of Syene; there is also the man of the *Annales*.

We do not speak of the sublime exile of Patmos, who also overwhelms the real world with a protest in the name of the ideal, makes of vision a tremendous satire, and throws upon Nineveh-Rome, upon Babylon-Rome, upon Sodom-Rome, the flaming reverberation of the Apocalypse.

John upon his rock is the sphinx upon her pedestal; we can not comprehend him; he is a Jew, and it is Hebrew; but the man who wrote the "Annales" is a Latin; let us rather say he is a Roman.

As the Neros reigned darkly, they should be pictured so. Work with the graver only would be pale; into the grooves should be poured a concentrated prose which bites.

Despots are an aid to thinkers. Speech enchained is speech terrible. The writer doubles and triples his style when silence is imposed by a master upon the people. There springs from this silence a certain mysterious fullness which filters and freezes into brass in the thoughts. Compression in the history produces conciseness in the historian. The granitic solidity of some celebrated prose is only a condensation produced by the tyrant.

Tyranny constrains the writer to shortenings of diameter, which are increases of strength. The Ciceronian period, hardly sufficient upon Verres, would lose its edge upon Caligula. Less roundness in the phrase, more intensity in the blow. Tacitus thinks with his arm drawn back.

The nobility of a great heart, condensed into justice and truth, strikes like a thunderbolt.

Be it said in passing, it is noteworthy that Tacitus was



not historically superimposed upon Cæsar. The Tiberii were reserved for him. Cæsar and Tacitus are two successive phenomena whose meeting seems mysteriously avoided by Him who, in putting the centuries on the stage, rules the entrances and the exits. Cæsar is grand, Tacitus is grand; God spares these two grandeurs by not dashing them against each other. The judge, striking Cæsar, might strike too hard, and be unjust. God did not will it. The great wars of Africa and Spain, the destruction of the Cilician pirates, civilization introduced into Gaul, into Britain, into Germany, all this glory covers the Rubicon. There is a delicacy of divine justice here, hesitating to let loose the terrible historian upon the illustrious usurper, saving Cæsar from Tacitus, and according to the genius the extenuating circumstances.

Certainly, despotism is always despotism, even under the despot of genius. There is corruption under illustrious tyrants, but the moral pestilence is more hideous still under infamous tyrants. In these reigns nothing veils the shame; and makers of examples, Tacitus as well as Juvenal, belabor to best purpose in presence of the human race this ignominy without excuse.

Rome smells worse under Vitellius than under Sylla. Under Claudius and under Domitian there is a deformity of baseness corresponding to the ugliness of the tyrant. The foulness of the slaves is a direct result of the despot; a miasma exhales from these crouching consciences which reflect the master; the public powers are unclean; hearts are small; consciences are sunken, souls are puny; this is so under Caracalla, this is so under Commodus, this is so under Heliogabalus, while there comes from the Roman senate under Cæsar only the rank odor peculiar to the eagle's eyrie.

Hence the coming, apparently late, of the Tacituses and of the Juvenals; it is at the hour of evidence that the demonstrator appears.

But Juvenal and Tacitus, even like Isaiah in the biblical times, even like Danté in the Middle Ages, are men; the émeute and the insurrection are the multitude, which sometimes is wrong, sometimes is right.

In the most usual cases émeute springs from a material fact; insurrection is always a moral phenomenon. The

émeute is Masaniello; the insurrection is Spartacus. Insurrection borders on the mind, émeute on the stomach, Gaster is irritated; but Gaster, certainly, is not always wrong. In cases of famine, émeute, Buzançais, for instance, has a true, pathetic and just point of departure. Still it remains émeute. Why? because having reason at bottom, it was wrong in form. Savage, although right, violent, although strong, it struck at hazard; it marched like the blind elephant, crushing; it left behind it the corpses of old men, women, and children; it poured out, without knowing why, the blood of the inoffensive and the innocent. To nurture the people is a good end; to massacre is an evil means.

Every armed protest, even the most legitimate, even the 10th of August, even the 14th of July, ends with the same trouble. Before the right is evolved there is tumult and foam. In the beginning insurrection is an émeute, even as the river is a torrent. Ordinarily it ends in this ocean, revolution. Sometimes, however, coming from those high mountains which rule the moral horizon, justice, wisdom, reason, right, made of the purest snow of the ideal, after a long fall from rock to rock, after having reflected the sky in its transparency and being swollen by a hundred affluents in the majestic path of triumph, insurrection suddenly loses itself in some bourgeois quagmire like the Rhine in a marsh.

All this is of the past, the future is different. Universal suffrage is so far admirable that it dissolves the émeute in its principle, and by giving a vote to insurrection it takes away its arms. The vanishing of war, of the war of the streets as well as the war of the frontiers, such is inevitable progress. Whatever may be to-day, peace is to-morrow.

However, insurrection, émeute, in what the first differs from the second, the bourgeois, properly speaking, knows little of these shades. To him all is sedition, rebellion pure and simple, revolt of the dog against the master, attempt to bite which must be punished by chain and kennel, barking, yelping, till the day when the dog's head, suddenly enlarged, stands out dimly in the darkness with a lion's face.

Then the bourgeois cries: "*Vive le peuple!*"

This explanation given, what, for history, is the movement of June, 1832? is it an émeute? is it an insurrection?

It is an insurrection.

We may happen, in this presentation of a fearful event, sometimes to say the émeute, but only to denote the surface facts, and always maintaining the distinction between the form émeute and the substance insurrection.

This movement of 1832 had, in its rapid explosion and in its dismal extinction, so much grandeur that those even who see in it only an émeute do not speak of it without respect. To them it is like a remnant of 1830. "Excited imaginations," say they, "do not calm down in a day." A revolution is not cut off square. It has always some necessary undulations before returning to the condition of peace, like a mountain on descending toward the plain. There are no Alps without their Jura, nor Pyrenees without Asturias.

This pathetic crisis of contemporary history, which the memory of Parisians calls "the epoch of émeutes," is surely a characteristic period amid the stormy periods of this century. A last word before resuming the narrative.

The events which we are about to relate belong to that dramatic and living reality which the historian sometimes neglects, for lack of time and space. In them, however, we insist, in them is the life, the palpitation, the quivering of humanity. Little incidents, we believe we have said, are, so to speak, the foliage of great events and are lost in the distance of history. The epoch known as that of "émeutes" abounds in details of this kind. The judicial investigations, for other reasons than history, did not reveal everything, nor perhaps get to the bottom of everything. We shall, therefore, bring to light, among the known and public circumstances, some things which have never been known—deeds over some of which oblivion has passed; over others, death. Most of the actors in those gigantic scenes have disappeared; from the morrow they were silent; but what we shall relate we can say that we saw. We shall change some names, for history relates and does inform against, but we shall paint reality. From the nature of the book which we are writing, we only show one side and an episode, and that certainly the least known, of the days of the 5th and 6th of June, 1832; but we shall do it in such



a way that the reader may catch a glimpse, under the gloomy veil which we are about to lift, of the real countenance of that fearful public tragedy.

### III

#### A BURIAL: OPPORTUNITY FOR RE-BIRTH

IN the spring of 1832, although for three months the cholera had chilled all hearts and thrown over their agitation an inexpressibly mournful calm, Paris had for a long time been ready for a commotion. As we have said, the great city resembles a piece of artillery; when it is loaded the falling of a spark is enough, the shot goes off. In June, 1832, the spark was the death of Gen. Lamarque.

Lamarque was a man of renown and of action. He had had successively, under the Empire and under the Restoration, the two braveries necessary to the two epochs, the bravery of the battlefield and the bravery of the rostrum. He was eloquent as he had been valiant; men felt a sword in his speech. Like Foy, his predecessor, after having upheld command, he upheld liberty. He sat between the Left and the Extreme Left, loved by the people because he accepted the chances of the future, loved by the masses because he had served the Emperor well. He was, with Counts Gérard and Drouet, one of Napoleon's marshals *in petto*. The treaties of 1815 regarded him as a personal offence. He hated Wellington with a direct hatred, which pleased the multitude; and for seventeen years, hardly noticing intermediate events, he had majestically preserved the sadness of Waterloo. In his death agony, at his latest hour, he had pressed against his breast a sword which was presented to him by the officers of the Hundred Days. Napoleon died pronouncing the word *armée*—Lamarque pronouncing the word *patrie*.

His death, which had been looked for, was dreaded by the people as a loss and by the government as an opportunity. This death was a mourning. Like everything which is bitter, mourning may turn into revolt. This is what happened.

The eve and the morning of the 5th of June, the day fixed for the funeral of Lamarque, the Faubourg St. Antoine, through the edge of which the procession was to pass,

assumed a formidable aspect. That tumultuous network of streets was full of rumor. Men armed themselves as they could. Some joiners carried their bench-claw "to stave in the doors." One of them had made a dagger of a shoe-hook by breaking off the hook and sharpening the stump. Another, in the fever "to attack," had slept for three nights without undressing. A carpenter named Lombier met a comrade, who asked him: "Where are you going?" "Well, I have no arms." "What then?" "I am going to my yard to look for my compasses." "What for?" "I don't know," said Lombier. A certain Jacqueline, a man of business, hailed very workingman who passed by with: "Come, you!" He bought ten sous' worth of wine and said: "Have you any work?" "No." "Go to Filspierre's, between the Barrière Montreuil and the Barrière Charonne; you will find work." They found at Filspierre's cartridges and arms. Certain known chiefs "did the post"; that is to say, ran from one house to another to assemble their people. At Barthélemy's, near the Barrière du Trône, and at Capet's, at the Petit Chapeau, the drinkers accosted each other seriously. They were heard to say: "Where is your pistol?" "Under my blouse." "And yours?" "Under my shirt." On the Rue Traversiere, in front of the Roland workshop, and in the Cour de la Maison Brûlée, in front of Bernier's machine-shop, groups were whispering. Among the most ardent a certain Mavot was noticed, who never worked more than a week in one shop, the masters sending him away "because they had to dispute with him every day." Mavot was killed the next day in the barricade, in the Rue Ménilmontant. Petot, who was also to die in the conflict, seconded Mavot, and to this question: "What is your object?" answered: "Insurrection." Some workingmen, gathered at the corner of the Rue de Bercy, were waiting for a man named Lemarin, revolutionary officer for the Faubourg St. Marceau. Orders were passed about almost publicly.

On the 5th of June, then, a day of mingled rain and sunshine, the procession of General Lamarque passed through Paris with the official military pomp, somewhat increased by way of precaution. Two battalions, drums muffled, muskets reversed, 10,000 national guards, their sabres at their sides, the batteries of artillery of the national

guard, escorted the coffin. The hearse was drawn by young men. The officers of the Invalides followed immediately, bearing branches of laurel. Then came a countless multitude, strange and agitated; the sectionaries of the friends of the people, the law school, the medical school, refugees from all nations, Spanish, Italian, German, Polish flags, horizontal, tri-colored flags, every possible banner, children waving green branches, stonecutters and carpenters, who were on a strike at that very moment; printers, recognizable by their paper caps, walking two by two, three by three, uttering cries, almost all brandishing clubs, a few swords, without order, and yet with a single soul, now a route, now a column. Some platoons chose chiefs; a man armed with a pair of pistols, openly worn, seemed to be passing others in review as they filed off before him. On the cross alleys of the boulevards, in the branches of the trees, on the balconies, at the windows, on the roofs, were swarms of heads—men, women, children; their eyes were full of anxiety. An armed multitude was passing by, a terrified multitude was looking on.

The government also was observing. It was observing with its hand upon the hilt of the sword. One might have seen, all ready to march, with full cartridge-boxes, guns and musketoons loaded, in the Place Louis XV, four squadrons of carbineers; in the saddle, trumpets at their head, in the Latin Quartier and at the Jardin des Plantes, the municipal guard, en échelon from street to street; at the Halle aux Vins a squadron of dragoons, at La Grève one-half of the 12th Light, the other half at the Bastille, the 6th Dragoons at the Célestins, the court of the Louvre full of artillery. The rest of the troops were stationed in the barracks, without counting the regiments in the environs of Paris. Anxious authority held suspended over the threatening multitude 24,000 soldiers in the city and 30,000 in the banlieue.

Divers rumors circulated in the cortège; they talked of legitimist intrigues; they talked of the Duke of Reichstadt, whom God was marking for death at that very moment when the populace was designating him for emperor. A personage still unknown announced that at the appointed hour two foremen, who had been won over, would open to the people the doors of a manufactory of arms.



The dominant expression on the uncovered foreheads of most of those present was one of subdued enthusiasm. Here and there in this multitude, a prey to so many violent, but noble, emotions, could also be seen some genuine faces of malefactors and ignoble mouths, which said "pillage!" There are certain agitations which stir up the bottom of the marsh and which make clouds of mud rise in the water. A phenomenon to which "well-regulated" police are not strangers.

The cortège made its way, with a feverish slowness, from the house of death, along the boulevards as far as the Bastille. It rained from time to time; the rain had no effect upon that throng. Several incidents, the coffin drawn around the Vendôme column, the stones thrown at the Duke de Fitz James, who was seen on a balcony with his hat on, the Gaelic cock torn from a popular flag and dragged in the mud, a sergent-de-ville wounded by a sword-thrust at the Porte St. Martin, an officer of the 12th Light saying aloud: "I am a Republican!" the polytechnic school unlooked for after its forced countersign, the cries: "*Vive l'école polytechnique!*" "*Vive la république!*" marked the progress of the procession. At the Bastille, long and formidable files of the curious from the Faubourg St. Antoine made their junction with the cortège, and a certain terrible ebullition began to upheave the multitude.

One man was heard saying to another: "Do you see that man with the red beard? It is he who will say when we must draw." It would appear that that same red beard was found afterward with the same office in another émeute; the Quenisset affair.

The hearse passed the Bastille, followed the canal, crossed the little bridge, and reached the esplanade of the bridge of Austerlitz. There it stopped. At this moment a bird's-eye view of this multitude would have presented the appearance of a comet, the head of which was at the esplanade, while the tail, spreading over the Quai Bourdon, covered the Bastille, and stretched along the boulevard as far as the Porte St. Martin. A circle was formed about the hearse. The vast assemblage became silent. Lafayette spoke and bade farewell to Lamarque. It was a touching and august moment, all heads were uncovered, all hearts throbbed. Suddenly a man on horseback, dressed in black,

appeared in the midst of the throng with a red flag, others say with a pike surmounted by a red cap. Lafayette turned away his head. Excelmans left the cortège.

This red flag raised a storm and disappeared in it. From the Boulevard Bourdon to the bridge of Austerlitz one of those shouts which resemble billows moved the multitude. Two prodigious shouts arose: "Lamarque to the Pantheon!" "Lafayette to the Hôtel de Ville!" Some young men, amid the cheers of the throng, harnessed themselves and began to draw Lamarque in the hearse over the bridge of Austerlitz and Lafayette in a fiacre along the Quai Morland.

In the crowd which surrounded and cheered Lafayette was noticed and pointed out a German named Ludwig Snyder, who afterward died a centenarian, who had also been in the war of 1776, and who had fought at Trenton under Washington and under Lafayette at Brandywine.

Meanwhile, on the left bank, the municipal cavalry was in motion, and had just barred the bridge; on the right bank the dragoons left the Célestins and deployed along the Quai Morland. The men who were drawing Lafayette suddenly perceived them at the corner of the quai, and cried: "The dragoons!" The dragoons were advancing at a walk, in silence, their pistols in their holsters, their sabres in their sheaths, their musketoon in their rests, with an air of gloomy expectation.

At two hundred paces from the little bridge they halted. The fiacre in which Lafayette was made its way up to them, they opened their ranks, let it pass, and closed again behind it. At that moment the dragoons and the multitude came together. The women fled in terror.

What took place in that fatal moment? nobody could tell. It was the dark moment when two clouds mingle. Some say that a trumpet flourish sounding the charge was heard from the direction of the arsenal, others that a dagger-thrust was given by a child to a dragoon. The fact is that three shots were suddenly fired; the first killed the chief of the squadron, Cholet, the second killed an old deaf woman who was closing her window in the Rue Contrescarpe, the third singed the epaulet of an officer; a woman cried: "They are beginning too soon!" and all at once there was seen, from the side opposite the Quai Mor-

land, a squadron of dragoons which had remained in barracks turning out on the gallop, with swords drawn, from the Rue Bassompierre and the Boulevard Bourdon, and sweeping all before them.

There are no more words, the tempest breaks loose, stones fall like hail, musketry bursts forth, many rush headlong down the bank and cross the little arm of the Seine now filled up; the yards of the Ile Louvres, that vast ready-made citadel, bristle with combatants, they tear up stakes, they fire pistol-shots, a barricade is planned out, the young men crowded back, pass the bridge of Austerlitz with the hearse at a run, and charge on the municipal guard, the carbineers rush up, the dragoons ply the sabre, the mass scatters in every direction, a rumor of war flies to the four corners of Paris, men cry: "To arms!" they run, they tumble, they fly, they resist. Wrath sweeps along the émeute as the wind sweeps along a fire.

#### IV

##### THE EBULLITIONS OF FORMER TIMES

NOTHING is more extraordinary than the first swarming of an émeute. Everything bursts out everywhere at once. Was it foreseen? Yes. Was it prepared? No. Whence does it spring? From the pavements. Whence does it fall? From the clouds. Here the insurrection has the character of a plot; there of an improvisation. The first comer takes possession of a current of the multitude and leads it whither he will. A beginning full of terror with which is mingled a sort of frightful gayety. At first there are clamors, the shops close, the displays of the merchants disappear; then some isolated shots; people flee; butts of guns strike against *porte-cochère*; you hear the servant-girls laughing in the yards of the houses and saying: "There is going to be a row!"

A quarter of an hour had not elapsed, and here is what had taken place nearly at the same time at twenty different points in Paris.

In the Rue St. Croix de la Bretonnerie some twenty young men, with beards and long hair, entered a smoking-room and came out again a moment afterward, bearing a



horizontal tri-color flag covered with crape, and having at their head three men armed, one with a sword, another with a gun, the third with a pike.

In the Rue des Nonaindières, a well-dressed bourgeois, who was pursy, had a sonorous voice, a bald head, a high forehead, a black beard, and one of those rough mustaches which can not be smoothed down, offered cartridges publicly to the passer-by.

In the Rue St. Pierre Montmartre, some men with bare arms paraded a black flag on which these words could be read in white letters: "Republic or Death." In the Rue des Jeûneurs, the Rue du Cadran, the Rue Montorgueil, and the Rue Mandar, appeared groups waving flags, on which were visible in letters of gold the word "Section" with a number. One of these flags was red and blue with an imperceptible white stripe between.

A manufactory of arms was rifled on the Boulevard St. Martin, and three armorer's shops, the first in the Rue Beaubourg, the second in the Rue Michel le Comte, the third in the Rue du Temple. In a few minutes the thousand hands of the multitude seized and carried off 230 muskets, nearly all double-barreled, sixty-four swords, eighty-three pistols. To arm more people one took the gun, another the bayonet.

Opposite the Quai de la Grève, young men armed with muskets installed themselves with the women to shoot. One of them had a musket with a match-lock. They rang, entered, and set to making cartridges. One of these women said: "I did not know what cartridges were; my husband told me so."

A throng broke into a curiosity-shop in the Rue des Vieilles Haudriettes and took some yataghans and Turkish arms.

The corpse of a mason killed by a musket shot was lying in the Rue de la Perle.

And then right bank, left bank, on the quais, on the boulevards, in the Latin Quartier, in the region of the markets, breathless men, workingmen, students, sectionaries, read proclamations, cried: "To arms!" broke the street lamps, unharnessed wagons, tore up the pavements, broke in the doors of the houses, uprooted the trees, ransacked the cellars, rolled hogsheads, heaped up paving-

stones, pebbles, pieces of furniture, boards, made barricades.

They forced the bourgeois to help them. They went into the women's houses, made them give up the sword and the gun of their absent husbands, and wrote over the door with Spanish white: "The arms are delivered." Some signed "with their names" receipts for the gun and sword, and said: "Send for them to-morrow to the mairie." They disarmed the solitary sentinels in the streets and the national guards going to their municipality. They tore off the officers' epaulets. In the Rue du Cimetière Sainte Nicolas, an officer of the national guard, pursued by a troop armed with clubs and foils, took refuge with great difficulty in a house which he was able to leave only at night and in disguise.

In the Quartier St. Jacques the students came out of their hotels in swarms and went up the Rue Saint Hyacinthe to the Café du Progrès or down to the Café des Sept Billards on the Rue des Mathurins. There before the doors some young men standing upon the posts distributed arms. They pillaged the lumber-yards on the Rue Transnonain to make barricades. At a single point the inhabitants resisted, at the corner of the Rues Sainte Avoye and Simon le Franc, where they destroyed the barricades themselves. At a single point the insurgents gave way; they abandoned a barricade commenced in the Rue du Temple, after having fired upon a detachment of the national guard and fled through the Rue de la Corderie. The detachment picked up in the barricade a red flag, a package of cartridges, and three hundred pistol balls. The national guards tore up the flag and carried the shreds at the point of their bayonets.

All that we are here relating slowly and successively took place at once in all points of the city in the midst of a vast tumult like a multitude of flashes in a single peal of thunder.

In less than an hour twenty-seven barricades rose from the ground in the single quartier of the markets. At the centre was that famous house, No. 50, which was the fortress of Jeanne and her 106 companions, and which, flanked on one side by a barricade, at St. Merry, and on the other by a barricade on the Rue Maubée, commanded

three streets—the Rue des Arcis, the Rue St. Martin, and the Rue Aubry le Boucher—on which it fronted. The two barricades at right angles ran back, one from the Rue Montorgueil to the Grande Truanderie and the other from the Rue Geoffroy Langevin to the Rue Sainte Avoye. Without counting innumerable barricades in twenty other quarters of Paris, in the Marais, at Mount St. Geneviève; one on the Rue Ménilmontant, where could be seen a *porte-cochère* torn from its hinges; another near the little bridge of the Hôtel Dieu made with an écos saie unhitched and overturned within three hundred yards of the préfecture of police.

At the barricade on the Rue des Ménétrier a well-dressed man distributed money to the laborers. At the barricade on the Rue Grenetat a horseman appeared and handed to him who appeared to be the chief of the barricade a roll which looked like a roll of money. "This," said he, "is to pay the expenses, wine, etc." A young man of light complexion, without a cravat, went from one barricade to another carrying orders. Another, with drawn sword and a blue police cap on his head, was stationing sentinels. In the interior, within the barricades, wine-shops and porters' lodges were converted into guard-houses. Moreover, the émeute was conducted according to the soundest military tactics. The narrow, uneven, sinuous streets, full of turns and corners, were admirably chosen; the environs of the markets in particular, a network of streets more intricate than a forest. The Society of the Friends of the People, it was said, had assumed the direction of the insurrection in the Quartier Sainte Avoye. A man, killed in Rue du Ponceau, who was searched, had a plan of Paris upon him.

What had really assumed the direction of the émeute was a sort of unknown impetuosity which was in the atmosphere. The insurrection abruptly had built the barricades with one hand, and with the other seized nearly all the posts of the garrison. In less than three hours, like a train of powder which takes fire, the insurgents had invaded and occupied on the right bank the arsenal, the Mayor's office of the Place Royale, all the Marais, the Popincourt manufactory of arms, the Galiote, the Château d'Eau, all the streets near the markets; on the left



bank the barracks of the Vétérans, Sainte Pélagie, the Place Maubert, the powder-mill of the Deux Moulins, all the Barrières. At five o'clock in the afternoon they were masters of the Bastille, the Lingerie, the Blancs Manteaux; their scouts touched the Place des Victoires and threatened the bank, the barracks of the Petits Pères, and the Hôtel des Postes. The third of Paris was in the émeute.

At all points the struggle had commenced on a gigantic scale; and from the disarmings, from the domiciliary visits, from the armorers' shops hastily invaded, there was this result, that the combat which was commenced by throwing stones was continued by throwing balls.

About six o'clock in the afternoon the Arcade Du Saumon became a field of battle. The émeute was at one end, the troops at the end opposite. They fired from one grating to the other. An observer, a dreamer, the author of this book, who had gone to get a near view of the volcano, found himself caught in the arcade between the two fires. He had nothing but the projection of the pilasters which separate the shops to protect him from the balls; he was nearly half an hour in this delicate situation.

Meanwhile the drums beat the long-roll, the national guards dressed and armed themselves in haste, the legions left the mairies, the regiments left their barracks. Opposite the Arcade De l'Ancre a drummer received a thrust from a dagger. Another, on the Rue du Cygne, was assailed by some thirty young men, who destroyed his drum and took away his sword. Another was killed in the Rue Grenier St. Lazare. In the Rue Michel le Comte, three officers fell dead, one after another. Several municipal guards, wounded in the Rue des Lombards, turned back.

In front of the Cour Batave a detachment of national guards found a red flag bearing this inscription: "Republican Revolution, No. 127." Was it a revolution in fact?

The insurrection had made the centre of Paris a sort of inextricable, tortuous, colossal citadel.

There was the focus, there was evidently the question. All the rest were only skirmishes. What proved that there all would be decided was that they were not yet fighting there.

In some regiments the soldiers were doubtful, which added to the frightful obscurity of the crisis. They remembered the popular ovation which in July, 1830, had greeted the neutrality of the 53d of the line. Two intrepid men, who had been proved by the great wars, Marshal de Lobau and General Bugeaud, commanded, Bugeaud under Lobau. Enormous patrols, composed of battalions of the line, surrounded by entire companies of the national guard, and preceded by a commissary of police with his badge, went out reconnoitring the insurgent streets. On their side, the insurgents placed pickets at the corners of the streets and boldly sent patrols outside of the barricades. They kept watch on both sides. The government, with an army in its hand, hesitated; night was coming on, and the tocsin of St. Merry began to be heard. The Minister of War of the time, Marshal Soult, who had seen Austerlitz, beheld this with gloomy countenance.

These old sailors, accustomed to correct manœuvring, and having no resource or guide, save tactics, that compass of battles, are completely lost in presence of that immense foam which is called the wrath of the people. The wind of revolutions is not tractable.

The national guard of the banlieue hurried together in disorder. A battalion of the 12th Light ran down from St. Denis, the 14th of the line arrived from Courbevoie, the batteries of the military school had taken position at the carrousel; artillery came from Vincennes.

Solitude reigned at the Tuileries. Louis Philippe was full of serenity.

## V

### ORIGINALITY OF PARIS

WITHIN two years, as we have said, Paris had seen more than one insurrection. Outside of the insurgent quarters nothing is usually more strangely calm than the physiognomy of Paris during an émeute. Paris accustoms itself very quickly to everything—it is only an émeute—and Paris is so busy that it does not trouble itself for so slight a thing. These colossal cities alone can contain at the same time a civil war and an indescribably

strange tranquillity. Usually, when the insurrection begins, when the drum, the long-roll, the *générale* are heard, the shopkeeper merely says:

"It seems there is some squabble in the Rue St. Martin."

Or:

"Faubourg Saint Antoine."

Often he adds with unconcern:

"Somewhere down that way."

Afterward, when he distinguishes the dismal and thrilling uproar of musketry and the firing of platoons, the shopkeeper says:

"It is getting warm, then! Hullo, it is getting warm!"

A moment afterward, if the *émeute* approaches and increases, he precipitately shuts his shop, and hastily puts on his uniform; that is to say, places his goods in safety and risks his person.

There is firing at the street corners, in an arcade, in a cul-de-sac; barricades are taken, lost, and retaken; blood flows, the fronts of the houses are riddled with grape, balls kill people in their beds, corpses incumber the pavement. A few streets off you hear the clicking of billiard balls in the cafés.

The theatres open their doors and play comedies; the curious chat and laugh two steps from these streets full of war. The *fiacres* jog along; passers are going to dine in the city. Sometimes in the very quartier where there is fighting. In 1831 a fusillade was suspended to let a wedding party pass by.

At the time of the insurrection of the 12th of May, 1839, in the Rue St. Martin, a little infirm old man, drawing a hand-cart surmounted by a tri-colored rag, in which there were decanters filled with some liquid, went back and forth from the barricade to the troops and from the troops to the barricade, impartially offering glasses of cocoa—now to the government, now to anarchy.

Nothing is more strange; and this is the peculiar characteristic of the *émeutes* of Paris, which is not found in any other capital. Two things are requisite for it—the greatness of Paris and its gayety. It requires the city of Voltaire and of Napoleon.

This time, however, in the armed contest of the fifth of June, 1832, the great city felt something which was, per-



haps, stronger than herself. She was afraid. You saw everywhere, in the most distant and the most "disinterested" quarters, doors, windows, and shutters closed in broad day. The courageous armed, the poltroons hid. The careless and busy wayfarer disappeared. Many streets were as empty as at four o'clock in the morning. Alarming stories were circulated, ominous rumors were spread. "That 'they' were masters of the bank"; "that merely at the cloisters of St. Merry there were six hundred intrenched and fortified in the church"; "that the line was doubtful"; "that Armand Carrel had been to see Marshal Clausel, and that the marshal had said: 'Have one regiment in the first place'"; "that Lafayette was sick, but that he had said to them notwithstanding: 'I am with you. I will follow you anywhere where there is room for a chair'"; "that it was necessary to keep on their guard"; "that in the night there would be people who would pillage the isolated houses in the deserted quarters of Paris" (in this the imagination of the police was recognized, that Anne Radcliffe mixed with government); "that a battery had been planted in the Rue Aubry le Boucher"; "that Lobau and Bugeaud were consulting; and that at midnight, or at daybreak at the latest, four columns would march at once upon the centre of the émeute, the first coming from the Bastille, the second from the Porte St. Martin, the third from La Grève, the fourth from the markets"; "that perhaps also the troops would evacuate Paris and retire into the Champ de Mars"; "that nobody knew what might happen, but that certainly, this time, it was serious." They were concerned about Marshal Soult's hesitation. "Why doesn't he attack right away?" It is certain that he was deeply absorbed. The old lion seemed to scent in that darkness some unknown monster.

Evening came; the theatres did not open; the patrols made their rounds spitefully; passers were searched; the suspicious were arrested. At nine o'clock there were more than eight hundred persons under arrest; the préfecture of police was crowded, the conciergerie was crowded; La Force was crowded. At the conciergerie, in particular, the long vault, which is called the Rue de Paris, was strewn with bundles of straw, on which lay a throng of prisoners, whom the man of Lyons, Lagrange, harangued valiantly.

The rustling of all this straw, stirred by all these men, was like the sound of a shower. Elsewhere the prisoners lay in the open air in the prison yards, piled one upon another. Anxiety was everywhere, and a certain tremor little known to Paris.

People barricaded themselves in their houses; wives and mothers were terrified; you heard only this: "Oh! my God! he has not come back!" In the distance there was heard very rarely the rumbling of a wagon. People listened, on their door-sills, to the rumors, the cries, the tumults, the dull and indistinct sounds, things of which they said: "That is the cavalry," or "Those are the ammunition wagons galloping down," the trumpets, the drums, the musketry, and, above all, that mournful tocsin of St. Merry. They expected the first cannon-shot. Men rose up at the corners of the streets and disappeared, crying: "Go home!" And they hastened to bolt their doors. They said: "How will it end?" From moment to moment, as night fell, Paris seemed colored more dismally with the fearful flame of the émeute.

## BOOK ELEVENTH—THE ATOM FRATER- NIZES WITH THE HURRICANE

### I

SOME INSIGHT INTO THE ORIGIN OF GAVROCHE'S POETRY—  
INFLUENCE OF AN ACADEMICIAN UPON THAT POETRY

AT the moment the insurrection, springing up at the shock of the people with the troops in front of the arsenal, determined a backward movement in the multitude which was following the hearse and which, for the whole length of the boulevards, weighed, so to say, upon the head of the procession, there was a frightful reflux. The mass wavered, the ranks broke, all ran, darted, slipped away, some with cries of attack, others with the pallor of flight. The great river which covered the boulevards divided in a twinkling, overflowed on the right and on the left, and poured in torrents into 200 streets at once with the rushing of an opened mill-sluice. At this moment a ragged child who was coming down the Rue Ménilmontant, holding in

his hand a branch of laburnum in bloom, which he had just gathered on the heights of Belleville, caught sight, before a second-hand dealer's shop, of an old horse-pistol. He threw his flowering branch upon the pavement and cried:

"Mother What's-your-name, I'll borrow your machine."

And he ran off with the pistol.

Two minutes later a flood of terrified bourgeois, who were fleeing through the Rue Amelot and the Rue Basse, met the child who was brandishing his pistol and singing:

"La nuit on ne voit rien,  
Le jour on voit très-bien,  
D'un écrit apocryphe  
Le bourgeois s'ébouriffe,  
Pratiquez la vertu,  
Tutu chapeau pointu!"

It was little Gavroche going to war.

On the boulevard he perceived that the pistol had no hammer.

Whose was this refrain which served him to time his march, and all the other songs which, on occasion, he was fond of singing? we do not know. Who knows? his own perhaps. Gavroche, besides, kept up with all the popular airs in circulation, and mingled with them his own warbling. A sprite and a devil, he made a medley of the voices of nature and the voices of Paris. He combined the repertory of the birds with the repertory of the workshops. He knew some painters' boys, a tribe contiguous to his own. He had been, as it appears, three months a printer's apprentice. He had done an errand one day for M. Baour-Lormain, one of the Forty. Gavroche was a *gamin* of letters.

Gavroche, moreover, had no suspicion that on that wretched rainy night when he had offered the hospitality of his elephant to two brats, it was for his own brothers that he had acted the part of Providence. His brothers in the evening, his father in the morning; such had been his night. On leaving the Rue des Ballets at early dawn, he had returned in haste to the elephant, artistically extracted the two *mômes*, shared with them such breakfast as he could invent, then went away, confiding them to that good mother, the street, who had almost brought him up himself. On leaving them, he had given them rendezvous for



the evening at the same place, and left them this discourse as a farewell: "I cut stick, otherwise spoken, I *esbigne*; or, as they say at the court, I haul off. Brats, if you don't find papa and mamma, come back here to-night. I will strike you up some supper and put you to bed." The two children, picked up by some sergent-de-ville and put in the retreat, or stolen by some mountebank, or simply lost in the immense Chinese-Parisian turmoil, had not returned. The lower strata of the existing social world are full of these lost traces. Gavroche had not seen them since. Ten or twelve weeks had elapsed since that night. More than once he had scratched the top of his head, and said: "Where the devil are my two children?"

Meanwhile, he had reached, pistol in hand, the Rue du Pont aux Choux. He noticed that there was now, in that street, but one shop open, and a matter worthy of reflection, a pastry cook's shop. This was a providential opportunity to eat one more apple-puff before entering the unknown. Gavroche stopped, fumbled in his trousers, felt in his fob, turned out his pockets, found nothing in them, not a sou, and began to cry: "Help!"

It is hard to lack the final cake.

Gavroche none the less continued on his way.

Two minutes later he was in the Rue St. Louis. While passing through the Rue du Pare Royal he felt the need of some compensation for the impossible apple-puff, and he gave himself the immense pleasure of tearing down the theatre posters in broad day.

A little further along, seeing a group of well-to-do persons pass by, who appeared to him to be men of property, he shrugged his shoulders and spit out at random this mouthful of philosophic bile:

"These rich men, how fat they are! They stuff themselves. They wallow in good dinners. Ask them what they do with their money. They don't know anything about it. They eat it, they do! How much of it the belly carries away!"

## II

## GAVROCHE ON THE MARCH

THE brandishing a pistol without a hammer, holding it in one's hand in the open street, is such a public function that Gavroche felt his spirits rise higher with every step. He cried, between the snatches of the "Marseillaise" which he was singing:

"It's all going well. I suffer a good deal in my left paw, I am broken with my rheumatism, but I am content, citizens. The bourgeois have nothing to do but to behave themselves. I am going to sneeze subversive couplets at them. What are the detectives? they are dogs. By jinks! don't let us fail in respect for dogs. Now I wish I had one to my pistol.\* I come from the boulevard, my friends; it is getting hot, it is boiling over a little, it is simmering. It is time to skim the pot. Forward, men! let their impure blood water the furrows! I give my days for my country. I shall never see my concubine again. N-e-ver, over, yes. Never! but it's all the same; let us be joyful; let us fight! Egad! I have had enough of despotism."

At that moment the horse of a lancer of the national guard, who was passing, having fallen down, Gavroche laid his pistol on the pavement and raised up the man; then he helped to raise the horse. After which he picked up his pistol and resumed his way.

In the Rue de Thorigny all was peace and silence. This apathy, suited to the Marais, contrasted with the vast surrounding uproar. Four gossips were chatting upon a doorstep. Scotland has her trios of witches, but Paris has her quartets of gossips; and the "thou shalt be king" would be quite as ominously cast at Bonaparte in the Baudoyer Square as at Macbeth in the heath of Forres. It would be almost the same croaking.

The gossips of the Rue de Thorigny were busy only with their own affairs. They were three portresses and a rag-picker with a basket and hook.

The four seemed standing at the four corners of old age,

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\* The French call the hammer of a pistol the *dog* of it.

those four corners which are decay, decrepitude, ruin, and sorrow.

The ragpicker was humble. In this outdoor society the ragpicker bows, the portress patronizes. That is a result of the sweepings which are, as the portresses will, fat or lean, according to the fancy of her who makes the head. There may be kindness in the broom.

This ragpicker was a grateful basket and she smiled, what a smile! to the three portresses. Such things as this were said:

"Ah, now, your cat is always spiteful, is she?"

"Luddy; cats, you know, are nat'rally the enemies of dogs. It is the dogs that complain."

"And folks, too."

"Still, cats' fleas don't get on folks."

"That's not the trouble; dogs are dangerous. I remember one year there was so many dogs they had to put it in the papers. It was the time they had the big sheep at the Tuileries to draw the King of Rome's little wagon. Do you remember the King of Rome?"

"Me, I liked the Duke of Bordeaux better."

"For my part, I knew Louis XVII. I like Louis XVII better."

"How dear meat is, Ma'am Patagon."

"Oh! don't speak of it; the butchering is horrid. Horridly horrid. They have nothing but tough meat now."

Here the ragpicker intervened:

"Ladies, business is very dull. The garbage heaps are shabby. Folks don't throw anything away in these days. They eat everything."

"There are poorer people than you, Vargoulême."

"Oh, that is true!" replied the ragpicker, with deference; "for my part I have an occupation."

There was a pause, and the ragpicker, yielding to that necessity for display which lies deepest in the human heart, added:

"In the morning when I get home I pick over the basketful, I make my sorties [probably sortings]. That makes heaps in my room. I put the rags in a basket, the cores in a tub, the linens in my closet, the woollens in my bureau, the old papers in the corner of the window, the things good to eat into my plate, the bits of glass in the



fireplace, the old shoes behind the door and the bones under my bed."

Gavroche, who had stopped behind, was listening.

"Old women," said he, "what business have you now talking politics?"

A volley assailed him, composed of a quadruple hoot.

"There is another scoundrel!"

"What has he got in his stump? A pistol?"

"I want to know, that beggar of a *môme*!"

"They are never quiet if they are not upsetting the government."

Gavroche, in disdain, made no other reply than merely to lift the end of his nose with his thumb while he opened his hand to its full extent.

The ragpicker cried:

"Spiteful go-bare-paws!"

She who answered to the name of Ma'am Patagon clapped her hands in horror.

"There is going to be troubles, that's sure. That rascal over there with a beard, I used to see him go by every morning with a young thing in a pink cap under his arm; to-day I see him go by, he was giving his arm to a musket. Ma'am Bacheux says that there was a revolution last week at—at—at—where is the place—at Pontoise. And then see him there with his pistol, that horrid blackguard? It seems the Célestins are all full of cannon. What would you have the government do with the scapegraces who do nothing but invent ways to disturb people, when we are beginning to be a little quiet, after all the troubles we have had, good Lord God, that poor queen that I see go by in the cart! And all this is going to make snuff dearer still. It is infamous! And surely I will go to see you guillotined, you scoundrel."

"You snifle, my ancient," said Gavroche. "Blow your promontory."

And he passed on.

When he reached the Rue Pavée the ragpicker recurred to his mind and he soliloquized thus:

"You do wrong to insult the revolutionists, Mother Heap-in-the-corner. This pistol is in your interest. It is so that you may have more things good to eat in your basket."

Suddenly he heard a noise behind him; it was the portress Patagon who followed him and who, from a distance, was shaking her fist at him, crying:

"You are nothing but a bastard!"

"Yes," said Gavroche: "I amuse myself at that in a profound manner."

Soon after he passed the Hôtel Lamoignon. There he shouted out this appeal:

"En route for battle!"

And he was seized with a fit of melancholy. He looked at his pistol with a reproachful air, which seemed an endeavor to soften it.

"I go off," said he to it, "but you do not go off."

One dog may distract attention from another. A very lean cur was passing. Gavroche was moved to pity.

"My poor bow-wow," said he, "have you swallowed a barrel, then, that all the hoops show?"

Then he bent his steps toward the Orme St. Gervais.

### III

#### JUST INDIGNATION OF A BARBER

THE worthy barber who drove away the two little boys to whom Gavroche opened the paternal intestines of the elephant was at this moment in his shop busy shaving an old legionary soldier who had served under the Empire. They were chatting. The barber had naturally spoken to the veteran of the émeute, then of General Lamarque, and from Lamarque they had come to the Emperor. Hence a conversation between a barber and a soldier, which Prudhomme, if he had been present, would have enriched with arabesques and which he would have entitled: "Dialogue of the razor and the sabre."

"Monsieur," said the wig-maker, "how did the Emperor mount on horseback?"

"Badly. He didn't know how to fall. So he never fell."

"Did he have fine horses? He must have had fine horses!"

"The day he gave me the cross I noticed his animal. She was a running mare, perfectly white. Her ears were very wide apart, saddle deep, head fine, marked with a black star, neck very long, knees strongly jointed, ribs

protruding, shoulders sloping, hindquarters powerful. A little more than fifteen hands high."

"A pretty horse," said the barber.

"It was the animal of his Majesty."

The barber felt that after this word a little silence was proper; he conformed to it, then resumed:

"The Emperor was never wounded but once, was he, monsieur?"

The old soldier answered with the calm and sovereign tone of a man who was there:

"In the heel. At Ratisbon. I never saw him so well dressed as he was that day. He was as neat as a penny."

"And you, M. Veteran, you must have been wounded often?"

"I?" said the soldier. "Ah! no great thing. I got two sabre slashes in my neck at Marengo, a ball in my right arm at Austerlitz, another in my left hip at Jena, at Friedland a bayonet thrust—there—at Moscow seven or eight lance thrusts, no matter where; at Lutzen a shell burst which crushed my finger—ah! and then at Waterloo a bullet in my leg. That is all."

"How beautiful it is," exclaimed the barber with a Pindaric accent, "to die on the field of battle! Upon my word, rather than die in my bed, of sickness, slowly a little every day, with drugs, plasters, syringes, and medicine, I would prefer a cannon ball in my belly!"

"You are not fastidious," said the soldier.

He had hardly finished when a frightful crash shook the shop. A pane of the window had been suddenly shattered.

The barber became pallid.

"Oh, God!" cried he, "there is one!"

"What?"

"A cannon ball."

"Here it is," said the soldier.

And he picked up something which was rolling on the floor. It was a stone.

The barber ran to the broken window and saw Gavroche, who was running with all his might toward the St. Jean market. On passing the barber's shop Gavroche, who had the two *mômes* on his mind, could not resist the



desire to bid him good-day, and had sent a stone through his sash.

"See!" screamed the barber, who, from white had become blue, "he makes mischief for the sake of mischief. What has anybody done to that *gamin*?"

## IV

## THE CHILD WONDERS AT THE OLD MAN

MEANWHILE Gavroche at the St. Jean market, where the guard was already disarmed, had just effected his junction with a band led by Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Feuilly. They were mostly armed. Bahorel and Jean Prouvaire had joined them and enlarged the group. Enjolras had a double-barreled fowling-piece, Combeferre a national guard's musket bearing the number of the legion, and at his waist two pistols which could be seen, his coat being unbuttoned; Jean Prouvaire an old cavalry musketoon, Bahorel a carbine; Courfeyrac was brandishing an unsheathed sword-cane. Feuilly, a drawn sabre in his hand, marched in the van, crying: "Poland forever!"

They came from the Quai Morland, cravatless, hatless, breathless, soaked by the rain, lightning in their eyes. Gavroche approached them calmly:

"Where are we going?"

"Come on," said Courfeyrac.

Behind Feuilly marched, or rather bounded, Bahorel, a fish in the water of the émeute. He had a crimson waistcoat and those words which crush everything. His waistcoat overcame a passer, who cried out in desperation:

"There are the reds!"

"The reds! the reds!" replied Bahorel. "A comical fear, bourgeois. As for me, I don't tremble before a red poppy; the little red hood inspires me with no dismay. Bourgeois, believe me, leave the fear of red to horned cattle."

He caught sight of a piece of wall on which was placarded the most peaceful sheet of paper in the world, a permission to eat eggs, a charge for Lent, addressed by the Archbishop of Paris to his *ouailles* (flock).

Bahorel exclaimed:

"*Ouailles*; polite way of saying *oies*" (geese).

And he tore the charge from the wall. This conquered Gavroche. From that moment Gavroche began to study Bahorel.

"Bahorel," observed Enjolras, "you are wrong. You should have let that charge alone; it is not with it that we have to do. You are expending your wrath uselessly. Economize your ammunition. We don't fire out of rank—no more with the soul than with the gun."

"Each in his own way, Enjolras," retorted Bahorel. "This bishop's prosing annoys me; I want to eat eggs without anybody's permission. You have the cold burning style; I amuse myself. Besides, I am not exhausting myself, I am gaining new energy; and if I tore down that charge, by Hercules! it was to give me an appetite."

This word "Hercules" struck Gavroche. He sought every opportunity to instruct himself and this tearer-down of posters had his esteem. He asked him:

"What does that mean, 'Hercules'?"

Bahorel answered:

"It means holy name of a dog in Latin."

Here Bahorel recognized at a window a pale young man with a black beard, who was looking at them as they were passing, probably a friend of the A B C. He cried to him:

"Quick, cartridges! *para bellum*."

"*Bel Homme* [handsome man]! that is true," said Gavroche, who now understood Latin.

A tumultuous cortège accompanied them, students, artists, young men affiliated to the Courgourde d'aix, workingmen, rivermen, armed with clubs and bayonets; a few, like Combeferre, with pistols thrust into their waistbands. An old man, who appeared very old, was marching with this band. He was not armed and he was hurrying that he should not be left behind, although he had a thoughtful expression. Gavroche perceived him:

"Whossat?" said he to Courfeyrac.

"That is an old man."

It was M. Mabeuf.

## V

## THE OLD MAN

WE must tell what had happened.

Enjolras and his friends were on the Boulevard Bourdon, near the warehouses, at the moment the dragoons charged. Enjolras, Courfeyrac, and Combeferre were among those who took to the Rue Bassompierre, crying: "To the barricades!" In the Rue Lesdiguières they met an old man trudging along. What attracted their attention was that this good man was walking zigzag, as if he were drunk. Moreover, he had his hat in his hand, although it had been raining all the morning, and was raining hard at that very moment. Courfeyrac recognized Father Mabeuf. He knew him from having seen him many times accompany Marius to his door. Knowing the peaceful and more than timid habits of the old churchwarden bookworm, and astounded at seeing him in the midst of this tumult, within two steps of the cavalry charges, almost in the midst of a fusillade, bareheaded in the rain, and walking among the bullets, he went up to him, and the émeuter of twenty-five and the octogenarian exchanged this dialogue:

"M. Mabeuf, go home."

"What for?"

"There is going to be a row."

"Very well."

"Sabre strokes, musket shots, M. Mabeuf."

"Very well."

"Cannon shots."

"Very well. Where are you going, you boys?"

"We are going to pitch the government over."

"Very well."

And he followed them. From that moment he had not uttered a word. His step had suddenly become firm; some workingmen had offered him an arm, he refused it with a shake of the head. He advanced almost to the front rank of the column, having at once the motion of a man who is walking, and the countenance of a man who is asleep.

"What a desperate good man!" murmured the students.



The rumor ran through the assemblage that he was an ancient conventionist, an old regicide. The company had turned into the Rue de la Verrerie.

Little Gavroche marched on with all his might with this song, which made him a sort of clarion. He sang:

“Voici la lune qui paraît,  
Quand irons-nous dans la forêt?  
Demandait Charlot à Charlotte.

“Tou tou tōu  
Pour Chatou.  
Je n’ai qu’un Dieu, qu’un roi, qu’un liard et qu’une botte.

“Pour avoir du de grand matin  
La rosée à même le thym,  
Deux moineaux étaient en ribote.

“Zi zi zi  
Pour Passy.  
Je n’ai qu’un Dieu, qu’un roi, qu’un liard et qu’une botte.

“Et ces deux pauvres petits loups  
Comme deux grives étaient soûls;  
Un tigre en riait dans sa grotte.

“Don don don  
Pour Meudon.  
Je n’ai qu’un Dieu, qu’un roi, qu’un liard et qu’une botte.

“L’un jurait et l’autre sacrait  
Quand irons-nous dans la forêt?  
Demandait Charlot à Charlotte.

“Tin tin tin  
Pour Pantin.  
Je n’ai qu’un Dieu, qu’un roi, qu’un liard et qu’une botte.” \*

They made their way toward St. Merry.

\* See the moon is shining, when shall we go into the woods? asked Charley of Charlotte.

Too, too, too, for Chatou. I have but one God, one king, one farthing, and one boot.

For having drank in early morn, dew and thyme, two sparrows were in a fuddle.

Zi, zi, zi, for Passy. I have but one God, one king, one farthing, and one boot.

And these two poor little wolves were as drunk as two thrushes; a tiger laughed at it in his cave.

## VI

## RECRUITS

THE band increased at every moment. Toward the Rue des Billettes, a man of tall stature, who was turning gray, whose rough and bold mien Courfeyrac, Enjolras, and Combeferre noticed, but whom none of them knew, joined them. Gavroche, busy singing, whistling, humming, going forward and rapping on the shutters of the shops with the butt of his hammerless pistol, paid no attention to this man.

It happened that, in the Rue de la Verrerie, they passed by Courfeyrac's door.

"That is lucky," said Courfeyrac; "I have forgotten my purse, and I have lost my hat." He left the company and went up to his room four stairs at a time. He took an old hat and his purse. He took also a large square box of the size of a big valise, which was hidden among his dirty clothes. As he was running down again the portress hailed him:

"M. de Courfeyrac?"

"Portress, what is your name?" responded Courfeyrac.

The portress stood aghast.

"Why, you know it very well; I am the portress; my name is Mother Veuvin."

"Well, if you call me M. de Courfeyrac again I shall call you Mother de Veuvin. Now, speak; what is it? What do you want?"

"There is somebody who wishes to speak to you."

"Who is it?"

"I don't know."

"Where is he?"

"In my lodge."

"The devil!" said Courfeyrac.

"But he has been waiting more than an hour for you to come home," replied the portress.

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Don, don, don, for Meudon. I have but one God, one king, one farthing, and one boot.

One swore and the other cursed. When shall we go into the woods? asked Charley of Charlotte.

Tin, tin, tin, for Pantin. I have but one God, one king, one farthing, and one boot.

At the same time a sort of young workingman, thin, pale, small, freckled, dressed in a torn blouse and patched pantaloons of ribbed velvet, and who had rather the appearance of a girl in boy's clothes than of a man, came out of the lodge and said to Courfeyrac in a voice which, to be sure, was not the least in the world a woman's voice:

"M. Marius, if you please."

"He is not in."

"Will he be in this evening?"

"I don't know anything about it."

And Courfeyrac added: "As for myself, I shall not be in."

The young man looked fixedly at him and asked him:

"Why so?"

"Because."

"Where are you going, then?"

"What is that to you?"

"Do you want me to carry your box?"

"I am going to the barricades."

"Do you want me to go with you?"

"If you like," answered Courfeyrac. "The road is free; the streets belong to everybody."

And he ran off to rejoin his friends. When he had rejoined them he gave the box to one of them to carry. It was not until a quarter of an hour afterward that he perceived that the young man had, in fact, followed them.

A mob does not go precisely where it wishes. We have explained that a gust of wind carries it along. They went beyond St. Merry, and found themselves, without really knowing how, in the Rue Saint Denis.

## BOOK TWELFTH—CORINTH

### I

#### HISTORY OF CORINTH FROM ITS FOUNDATION

**T**HE Parisians who, to-day, upon entering the Rue Rambuteau from the side of the markets, notice on their right, opposite the Rue Mondétour, a basket-maker's shop, with a basket for a sign, in the shape of the Emperor Napoleon the Great, with this inscription—



NAPOLEON EST FAIT  
TOUT EN OSIER,\*

do not suspect the terrible scenes which this very place saw thirty years ago.

Here were the Rue de la Chanvrerie, which the old signs spelled Chanverrierie, and the celebrated wine-shop called Corinth.

The reader will remember all that has been said about the barricade erected on this spot and eclipsed elsewhere by the barricade of St. Merry. Upon this famous barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, now fallen into deep obscurity, we are about to throw some little light.

Permit us to recur, for the sake of clearness, to the simple means already employed by us for Waterloo. Those who would picture to themselves with sufficient exactness the confused blocks of houses which stood at that period near the Pointe St. Eustache, at the northeast corner of the markets of Paris, where is now the mouth of the Rue Rambuteau, have only to figure to themselves, touching the Rue Saint Denis at its summit, and the markets at its base, an N, of which the two vertical strokes would be the Rue de la Grande Truanderie and the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and the Rue de la Petite Truanderie would make the transverse stroke. The old Rue Mondétour cut the three strokes at the most awkward angles. So that the labyrinthine entanglement of these four streets suffices to make, in a space of 400 square yards, between the markets and the Rue Saint Denis in one direction, and between the Rue du Cygne and the Rue des Prêcheurs in the other direction, seven islets of houses, oddly intersecting, of various sizes, placed crosswise and as if by chance, and separated but slightly, like blocks of stone in a stone-yard, by narrow crevices.

We say narrow crevices, and we can not give a more just idea of those obscure, contracted, angular lanes, bordered by ruins eight stories high. These houses were so dilapidated that, in the Rues de la Chanvrerie and de la Petite Truanderie, the fronts were shored up with beams reaching from one house to another. The street was narrow

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\*NAPOLEON IS MADE  
ALL OF WILLOW BRAID.

and the gutter wide, the passer walked along a pavement which was always wet, beside shops that were like cellars, great stone blocks encircled with iron, immense garbage heaps, and alley gates armed with enormous and venerable gratings. The Rue Rambuteau has devastated all this.

The name Mondétour pictures marvelously well the windings of all this route. A little further along you found them still better expressed by the "Rue Pirouette," which ran into the Rue Mondétour.

The passer who came from the Rue Saint Denis into the Rue de la Chanvrerie saw it gradually narrow away before him as if he had entered an elongated funnel. At the end of the street, which was very short, he found the passage barred on the market side, and he would have thought himself in a cul-de-sac if he had not perceived on the right and on the left two black openings by which he could escape. These were the Rue Mondétour, which communicated on the one side with the Rue des Prêcheurs, on the other with the Rues du Cygne and Petite Truanderie. At the end of this sort of cul-de-sac, at the corner of the opening on the right, might be seen a house lower than the rest, and forming a kind of cape on the street.

In this house, only two stories high, had been festively installed for 300 years an illustrious wine-shop. This wine-shop raised a joyful sound in the very place which old Théophile has rendered famous in these two lines:

Là branle le squelette horrible  
D'un pauvre amant qui se pendit.\*

The location was good. The proprietorship descended from father to son.

In the times of Mathurin Régnier, this wine-shop was called the "Pot aux Roses" (the Pot of Roses), and as rebuses were in fashion it had for a sign a post (*poteau*) painted rose color. In the last century the worthy Natoire, one of the fantastic masters now held in disdain by the rigid school, having got tipsy several times in this wine-shop at the same table where Régnier had got drunk, out of gratitude painted a bunch of Corinth grapes upon the rose-colored post. The landlord, from joy, changed his

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\* There rattles the horrible skeleton of a poor lover who hung himself

sign, and had gilded below the bunch these words: "The Grapes of Corinth." Hence the name Corinth. Nothing is more natural to drinkers than an ellipsis. The ellipsis is the zigzag of phrase. Corinth gradually dethroned the "Pot aux Roses." The last landlord of the dynasty, Father Hucheloup, not even knowing the tradition, had the post painted blue.

A basement-room, in which was the counter; a room on the first floor, in which was the billiard table; a spiral wooden staircase piercing the ceiling, wine on the tables, smoke on the walls, candles in broad day, such was the wine-shop. A stairway with a trap-door in the basement-room led to the cellar. On the second floor were the rooms of the Hucheloups. You ascended by a stairway, which was rather a ladder than a stairway, the only entrance to which was by a back door in the large room on the first floor. In the attic two garret rooms, with dormer windows, nests for servants. The kitchen divided the ground-floor with the counting-room.

Father Hucheloup was, perhaps, a born chemist—he was certainly a cook; people not only drank in his wine-shop, they ate there. Hucheloup had invented an excellent dish which was found only at his house; it was stuffed carps, which he called *carpes au gras*. This was eaten by the light of a tallow candle or a lamp of the time of Louis XVI, upon tables on which an oilcloth was nailed for a tablecloth. Men came there from a distance. Hucheloup one fine morning thought proper to advertise by-passers of his "specialty"; he dipped a brush in a pot of blacking, and, as he had an orthography of his own, even as he had a cuisine of his own, he improvised upon his wall this remarkable inscription:

CARPES HO GRAS.

One winter the showers and the storms took a fancy to efface the S which terminated the first word and the G which commenced the third; it was left like this:

CARPE HO RAS.

Time and rain aiding, a humble gastronomic advertisement had become a profound piece of advice.

So that it happened that, not knowing French, Father



Hucheloup had known Latin; that he had brought philosophy out of his kitchen, and that, desiring simply to eclipse Carême, he had equaled Horace. And what was striking was that this also meant: "Enter my wine-shop."

Nothing of all this is at present in existence. The Mondétour labyrinth was ripped up and opened wide in 1847, and probably is now no more. The Rue de la Chanvrerie and Corinth have disappeared under the pavements of the Rue Rambuteau.

As we have said, Corinth was one of the meeting, if not rallying, places of Courfeyrac and his friends. It was Grantaire who had discovered Corinth. He had entered on account of *carpe ho ras* and he returned on account of *carpes au gras*. They drank there, they ate there, they shouted there; they paid little, they paid poorly, they did not pay at all; they were always welcome. Father Hucheloup was a good man.

Hucheloup, a good man, as we have just said, was a cook with mustaches; an amusing variety. He had always an ill-humored face, seemed to wish to intimidate his customers, grumbled at people who came to his house, and appeared more disposed to pick a quarrel with them than to serve them their soup. And, still, we maintain, they were always welcome. This oddity had brought custom to his shop, and led young men to him, saying to each other: "Come and hear Father Hucheloup grumble." He had been a fencing-master. He would suddenly burst out laughing. Coarse voice, good devil. His was a comic heart, with a tragic face; he asked nothing better than to frighten you, much like those snuff-boxes which have the shape of a pistol. The discharge is a sneeze.

His wife was Mother Hucheloup, a bearded creature, and very ugly.

Toward 1830 Father Hucheloup died. With him the secret of the *carpes au gras* was lost. His widow, scarcely consolable, continued the wine-shop. But the cuisine degenerated and became execrable, the wine, which had always been bad, became frightful. Courfeyrac and his friends continued to go to Corinth, however, "from pity," said Bossuet.

Widow Hucheloup was short-winded and deformed, with memories of the country. She relieved their tire-

someness by her pronunciation. She had a way of her own of saying things which spiced her village and spring-time reminiscences. It had once been her fortune, she affirmed, to hear "the leadbreasts sing in the hawthorns."

The room on the first floor, in which was "the restaurant," was a long and wide room, encumbered with stools, crickets, chairs, benches, and tables, and a rickety old billiard-table. It was reached by the spiral staircase which terminated at the corner of the room in a square hole like the hatchway of a ship.

This room, lighted by a single narrow window, and by a lamp which was always burning, had the appearance of a garret. All the pieces of furniture on four legs behaved as if they had but three. The whitewashed walls had no ornament except this quatrain in honor of Ma'am Hucheloup:

Elle étonne à dix pas, elle épouvante à deux.  
Une verrue habite en son nez hasardeux;  
On tremble à chaque instant qu'elle ne vous la mouche,  
Et qu'un beau jour son nez ne tombe dans si bouche.\*

This was written in charcoal on the wall.

Ma'am Hucheloup, the original, went back and forth from morning till night before this quatrain in perfect tranquillity. Two servants called Chowder and Fricassee, and for whom nobody had ever known any other names, helped Ma'am Hucheloup to put upon the tables the pitchers of blue wine and the various broths which were served to the hungry in earthen dishes. Chowder, fat, round, red, and boisterous, former favorite sultana of the defunct Hucheloup, was uglier than any mythological monster; still as it is fitting that the servant should always keep behind the mistress, she was less ugly than Ma'am Hucheloup. Fricassee, long, delicate, white with a lymphatic whiteness, rings around her eyes, eyelids drooping, always exhausted and dejected, subject to what might be called chronic weariness, up first, in bed last, served everybody, even the other servant, mildly and in silence, smiling through fatigue with a sort of a vague, sleepy smile.

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\* She astounds at ten paces, she terrifies at two, a wart inhabits her dangerous nose; you tremble every moment lest she blow it you, and lest some fine day her nose may fall into her mouth.

Before entering the restaurant-room you might read upon the door this line written in chalk by Courfeyrac:

Régale si tu peux et mange si tu l'oses.\*

## II

### PRELIMINARY GAYETY

**L**AIGLE DE MEAUX, we know, lived more with Joly than elsewhere. He had a lodging as the bird has a branch. The two friends lived together, ate together, slept together. Everything was in common with them, even Musichetta a little. They were what, among the Chapeau brothers, are called *bini*. On the morning of the 5th of June they went to breakfast at Corinth. Joly, whose head was stopped up, had a bad cold, which Laigle was beginning to share. Laigle's coat was threadbare, but Joly was well dressed.

It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they opened the door of Corinth.

They went up to the first floor.

Chowder and Fricassee received them: "Oysters, cheese, and ham," said Laigle.

They sat down at a table.

The wine-shop was empty; they two only were there.

Fricassee, recognizing Joly and Laigle, put a bottle of wine on the table.

As they were at their first oysters, a head appeared at the hatchway of the stairs, and a voice said:

"I was passing. I smelled in the street a delicious odor of Brie cheese. I have come in."

It was Grantaire.

Grantaire took a stool and sat down at the table.

Fricassee, seeing Grantaire, put two bottles of wine on the table.

That made three.

"Are you going to drink those two bottles?" inquired Laigle of Grantaire.

Grantaire answered:

"All are ingenious, you alone are ingenuous. Two bottles never astonished a man."

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\* Feast if you can and eat if you dare.



The others had begun by eating. Grantaire began by drinking. A half-bottle was quickly swallowed.

"Have you a hole in your stomach?" resumed Laigle.

"You surely have one in your elbow," said Grantaire.

And after emptying his glass he added:

"Ah, now, Laigle of the funeral orations, your coat is old."

"I hope so," replied Laigle. "That makes us agree so well, my coat and I. It has got all my wrinkles, it doesn't bind me anywhere, it has fitted itself to all my deformities, it is complaisant to all my motions; I feel it only because it keeps me warm. Old coats are the same thing as old friends."

"That's true," exclaimed Joly, joining in the dialogue, "an old *habit* [coat] is an old *abi* [friend]."

"Especially," said Grantaire, "in the mouth of a man whose head is stuck up."

"Grantaire," asked Laigle, "do you come from the boulevard?"

"No."

"We just saw the head of the procession pass, Joly and I."

"It is a marvelous spectacle," said Joly.

"How quiet this street is!" exclaimed Laigle. "Who would suspect that Paris is all topsy-turvy? You see this was formerly all monasteries about here. Du Breul and Sauval give the list of them and the Abbé Lebeuf. They were all around here; they swarmed; the shod, the unshod, the shaven, the bearded, the grays, the blacks, the whites, the Franciscans, the Minimi, the Capuchins, the Carmelites, the Lesser Augustines, the Greater Augustines, the Old Augustines. They littered."

"Don't talk about monks," interrupted Grantaire; "it makes me want to scratch."

Then he exclaimed:

"Peugh! I have just swallowed a bad oyster. Here's the hypochondria upon me again. The oysters are spoiled, the servants are ugly. I hate human kind. I passed just now in the Rue Richelieu before the great public library. This heap of oyster shells, which they call a library, disgusts me to think of. How much paper! how much ink! how much scribbling! Somebody has written all that! What booby

was it who said that man is a biped without feathers? And then I met a pretty girl whom I know, beautiful as spring, worthy to be called Floreal, and delighted, transported, happy, with the angels, the poor creature, because yesterday a horrid banker, pitted with small-pox, deigned to fancy her. Alas! woman watches the publican no less than the fop; cats chase mice as well as birds. This damsel, less than two months ago, was a good girl in a garret; she fixed the little rings of copper in the eyelets of corsets—how do you call it? She sewed, she had a bed, she lived with a flower-pot, she was contented. Now she is a bankeress. This transformation was wrought last night. I met the victim this morning, full of joy. The hideous part of it is that the wench was quite as pretty to-day as yesterday. Her financier didn't appear on her face. Roses have this much more or less than women, that the traces which worms leave on them are visible. Ah! there is no morality upon the earth! I call to witness the myrtle, the symbol of love; the laurel, the symbol of war; the olive, that goose, the symbol of peace; the apple, which almost strangled Adam with its seed, and the fig, the grandfather of petticoats. As to rights, do you want to know what rights are? The Gauls covet Clusium, Rome protects Clusium, and asks them what Clusium has done to them. Brennus answers: 'What Alba did to you, what Fidenæ did to you, what the Æqui, the Volsci, and the Sabines did to you. They were your neighbors. The Clusians are ours. We understand neighborhood as you do. You stole Alba, we take Clusium.' Rome says: 'You will not take Clusium.' Brennus took Rome. Then he cried: '*Væ victis!*' That is what rights are. Ah! in this world what beasts of prey, what eagles! it makes me crawl all over!"

He reached his glass to Joly, who filled it again, then he drank and proceeded almost without having been interrupted by this glass of wine, which nobody perceived, not even himself.

"Brennus, who takes Rome, is an eagle; the banker, who takes the grisette, is an eagle. No more shame here than there. Then let us believe in nothing. There is but one reality; to drink. Whatever may be your opinion, whether you are for the lean cock, like the canton of Uri, or for the fat cock, like the canton of Glaris, matters little, drink.

You talk to me of the boulevard, of the procession, et cetera. Ah, now there is going to be a revolution again, is there? This poverty of means on the part of God astonishes me. He has to keep greasing the grooves of events continually. It hitches, it does not go. Quick, a revolution. God has His hands black with this villanous cart-grease all the time. In His place I would work more simply. I wouldn't be winding up my machine every minute. I would lead the human race smoothly, I would knit the facts stitch to stitch, without breaking the thread; I would have no emergency, I would have no extraordinary repertory. What you fellows call progress moves by two springs, men and events. But, sad to say, from time to time the exceptional is necessary. For events as well as for men, the stock company is not enough; geniuses are needed among men and revolutions among events. Great accidents are the law; the order of things can not get along without them; and, to see the apparitions of comets, one would be tempted to believe that heaven itself is in need of star actors. At the moment you least expect it God placards a meteor on the wall of the firmament. Some strange star comes along, underlined by an enormous tail. And that makes Cæsar die. Brutus strikes him with a knife and God with a comet. Crack! there is an aurora borealis, there is a revolution, there is a great man; '93 in big letters, Napoleon with a line to himself, the comet of 1811 at the top of the poster. Ah! the beautiful blue poster, all studded with unexpected flourishes! Boom! boom! extraordinary spectacle. Look up, loungers. All is disheveled, the star as well as the drama. Good God! it is too much, and it is not enough. These resources, used in emergency, seem magnificence, and are poverty. My friends, Providence is put to his trumps. A revolution, what does that prove? That God is hard up. He makes a *coup d'état* because there is a solution of continuity between the present and the future, and because He, God, is unable to join the two ends. In fact, that confirms me in my conjectures about the condition of Jehovah's fortune; and to see so much discomfort above and below, so much rascality and odiousness and stinginess and distress in the heavens and on the earth, from the bird which has not a grain of millet to me who have not 100,000 livres of in-



come; to see human destiny, which is very much worn out, and even royal destiny, which shows the warp, witness the Prince of Condé hanged; to see winter, which is nothing but a rent in the zenith through which the wind blows, to see so many tatters even in the brand-new purple of the morning on the tops of the hills, to see the dew-drops, those false pearls, to see the frost, that paste, to see humanity ripped and events patched and so many spots on the sun and so many holes in the moon, to see so much misery everywhere, I suspect that God is not rich. He keeps up appearances, it is true, but I feel the pinch. He gives a revolution as a merchant whose credit is low gives a ball. We must not judge the gods from appearances. Beneath the gilding of the sky I catch a glimpse of a poor universe. Creation is bankrupt. That is why I am a malcontent. See, it is the 5th of June, it is very dark; since morning I have been waiting for the daybreak; it has not come, and I will bet that it won't come all day. It is a negligence of a badly paid clerk. Yes, everything is badly arranged, nothing fits anything, this old world is all rickety; I range myself with the opposition. Everything goes cross-grained; the universe is a tease. It is like children, those who want it haven't it, those who don't want it have it. Total: I scoff. Besides, Laigle de Meaux, that bald head, afflicts my sight. It humiliates me to think that I am the same age as that knee. Still, I criticise, but I don't insult. The universe is what it is. I speak here without malice and to ease my conscience. Receive, Father Eternal, the assurances of my distinguished consideration. Oh! by all the saints of Olympus and by all the gods of paradise, I was not made to be a Parisian, that is to say, to ricochet forever like a shuttlecock between two battledores from the company of loafers to the company of rioters! I was made to be a Turk, looking all day long at Oriental jades executing those exquisite dances of Egypt, as lascivious as the dreams of a chaste man or a Beauce peasant or a Venetian gentleman surrounded by gentle dames or a little German prince furnishing the half of a foot soldier to the Germanic confederation and occupying his leisure in drying his socks upon his hedge, that is to say, upon his frontier. Such is the destiny for which I was born. Yes, I said Turk, and I don't unsay it. I don't understand why

the Turks are commonly held in bad repute; there is some good in Mohammed; respect for the inventor of seraglios with houris and paradises with odalisks! Let us not insult Mohammedanism, the only religion that is adorned with a hen-roost! On that I insist upon drinking. The earth is a great folly. And it appears that they are going to fight, all these idiots, to get their heads broken, to massacre one another in midsummer, in the month of June, when they might go off with some creature under their arm to scent in the fields the huge cup of tea of the new-mown hay. Really, they are too silly. An old broken lamp which I saw just now at a second-hand shop suggests me a reflection. It is time to enlighten the human race. Yes, here I am, again sad. What a thing it is to swallow an oyster or a revolution the wrong way! I am getting dismal. Oh! the frightful old world! They strive with one another, they plunder one another, they prostitute one another, they kill one another, they get used to one another!"

And Grantaire, after this fit of eloquence, had a fit of coughing, which he deserved.

"Speakig of revolutiod," said Joly, "it appears that Barius is decidedly abourous."

"Does anybody know of whom?" inquired Laigle.

"Do."

"No?"

"Do! I tell you."

"Marius' amours!" exclaimed Grantaire, "I see them now. Marius is a fog and he must have found a vapor. Marius is of the race of poets. He who says poet says fool. *Tymbræus Apollo*. Marius and his Mary or his Maria or his Marietta or his Marion, they must make droll lovers. I imagine how it is. Ecstasies where they forget to kiss. Chaste upon the earth, but coupling in the infinite. They are souls which have senses. They sleep together in the stars."

Grantaire was entering on his second bottle, and perhaps his second harangue, when a new actor emerged from the square hole in the stairway. It was a boy of less than ten years, ragged, very small, yellow, a mug of a face, a keen eye, monstrous long hair, wet to the skin, a complacent look.

The child, choosing without hesitation among the three,

although he evidently knew none of them, addressed himself to Laigle de Meaux.

"Are you M. Bossuet?" asked he.

"That is my nickname," answered Laigle. "What do you want of me?"

"This is it. A big, light-complexioned fellow on the boulevard said to me: 'Do you know Mother Hucheloup?' I said: 'Yes, Rue Chanvrerie, the widow of the old man.' He said to me: 'Go there. You will find M. Bossuet there, and you will tell him from me: A B C.' It is a joke that somebody is playing on you, isn't it? He gave me ten sous."

"Joly, lend me ten sous," said Laigle, and, turning toward Grantaire: "Grantaire, lend me ten sous."

This made twenty sous, which Laigle gave the child.

"Thank you, monsieur," said the little fellow.

"What is your name?" asked Laigle.

"Navet, Gavroche's friend."

"Stop with us," said Laigle.

"Breakfast with us," said Grantaire.

The child answered:

"I can't; I am with the procession; I am the one to cry: 'Down with Polignac.'"

And giving his foot a long scrape behind him, which is the most respectful of all possible bows, he went away.

The child gone, Grantaire resumed:

"This is the pure *gamin*. There are many varieties in the *gamin* genus. The notary *gamin* is called *saute-ruisseau*, the cook *gamin* is called *marmiton*, the baker *gamin* is called *mitron*, the lackey *gamin* is called *groom*, the sailor *gamin* is called *mousse*, the soldier *gamin* is called *tapin*, the painter *gamin* is called *rapin*, the trader *gamin* is called *trottin*, the courtier *gamin* is called *menin*, the king *gamin* is called *dauphin*, the god *gamin* is called *bambino*."

Meanwhile Laigle was meditating; he said in an undertone: "A B C, that is to say: Lamarque's funeral."

"The big, light-complexioned man," observed Grantaire, "is Enjolras, who sent to notify you."

"Shall we go?" said Bossuet.

"It raids," said Joly. "I have sword to go through fire, dot water. I dod't wadt to catch cold."



"I stay here," said Grantaire. "I prefer a breakfast to a hearse."

"Conclusion: we stay," resumed Laigle. "Well, let us drink, then. Besides, we can miss the funeral without missing the émeute."

"Ah! the ébeute, I am id for that," exclaimed Joly.

Laigle rubbed his hands.

"Now they are going to retouch the Revolution of 1830. In fact, it binds the people in the armholes."

"It don't make much difference with me, your revolution," said Grantaire. "I don't execrate this government. It is the crown tempered with the night-cap. It is a sceptre, terminating in an umbrella. In fact, to-day, I should think, in this weather, Louis Philippe could make good use of his royalty at both ends, extend the sceptre end against the people, and open the umbrella end against the sky."

The room was dark, great clouds were completing the suppression of the daylight. There was nobody in the wine-shop nor in the street, everybody having gone "to see the events."

"Is it noon or midnight?" cried Bossuet. "We can't see a speck. Fricassee, a light."

Grantaire, melancholy, was drinking.

"Enjolras despises me," murmured he. "Enjolras said: 'Joly is sick. Grantaire is drunk.' It was to Bossuet that he sent Navet. If he had come for me, I would have followed him. So much the worse for Enjolras! I won't go to his funeral."

This resolution taken, Bossuet, Joly, and Grantaire did not stir from the wine-shop. About two o'clock in the afternoon the table on which they were leaning was covered with empty bottles. Two candles were burning, one in a perfectly green copper candlestick, the other in the neck of a cracked decanter. Grantaire had drawn Joly and Bossuet toward wine; Bossuet and Joly had led Grantaire toward joy.

As for Grantaire, since noon he had got beyond wine, an indifferent source of dreams. Wine, with serious drunkards, has only a quiet success. There is, in point of inebriety, black magic and white magic; wine is only white magic. Grantaire was a daring drinker of dreams. The

blackness of a fearful drunkenness yawning before him, far from checking him, drew him on. He had left the bottle behind and taken to the jug. The jug is the abyss. Having at his hand neither opium nor hasheesh, and wishing to fill his brain with mist, he had had recourse to that frightful mixture of brandy, stout, and absinth which produces such terrible lethargy. It is from these three vapors, beer, brandy, and absinth, that the lead of the soul is formed. They are three darknesses; the celestial butterfly is drowned in them; and there arise, in a membranous smoke vaguely condensed into bat wings, three dumb furies, nightmare, night, death, flitting above the sleeping Psyche.

Grantaire was not yet at this dreary phase; far from it. He was extravagantly gay, and Bossuet and Joly kept pace with him. They touched glasses. Grantaire added to the eccentric accentuation of his words and ideas incoherency of gesture; he rested his left wrist upon his knee with dignity, his arms akimbo, his cravat untied, and bestriding a stool, with his full glass in his right hand, he threw out to the fat servant, Chowder, these solemn words:

"Let the palace doors be opened! let everybody belong to the Académie Française, and have the right of embracing Mme. Hucheloup; let us drink."

And turning toward Ma'am Hucheloup, he added:

"Antique woman consecrated by use, approach that I may gaze upon thee!"

And Joly exclaimed:

"Chowder add Fricassee, don't give Grantaire any bore to drink. He spends his body foolishly. He has already devoured since this bordig in desperate prodigality two fragues didety-five cettibes."

And Grantaire replied:

"Who has been unhooking the stars without my permission to put them on the table in the shape of candles?"

Bousset, very drunk, had preserved his calmness.

He sat in the open window, wetting his back with the falling rain, and gazed at his two friends.

Suddenly he heard a tumult behind him, hurried steps, cries of "To arms!" He turned, and saw in the Rue Saint Denis, at the end of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, Enjolras passing, carbine in hand, and Gavroche with his pistol,

Feuilly with his sabre, Courfeyrac with his sword, Jean Prouvaire with his musketoon, Combeferre with his musket, Bahorel with his musket, and all the armed and stormy gathering which followed them.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie was hardly as long as the range of a carbine. Bossuet improvised a speaking-trumpet with his two hands, and shouted:

“Courfeyrac! Courfeyrac! ahoy!”

Courfeyrac heard the call, perceived Bossuet, and came a few steps into the Rue de la Chanvrerie, crying a “What do you want?” which was met on the way by a “Where are you going?”

“To make a barricade,” answered Courfeyrac.

“Well, here! this is a good place! make it here!”

“That is true, Eagle,” said Courfeyrac.

And at a sign from Courfeyrac the band rushed in the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

### III

#### NIGHT BEGINS TO GATHER OVER GRANTAIRE

THE place was indeed admirably chosen, the entrance of the street wide, the further end contracted and like a cul-de-sac, Corinth throttling it, Rue Mondétour easy to bar at the right and left, no attack possible except from the Rue Saint Denis, that is from the front, and without cover. Bossuet, tipsy, had the *coup d'œil* of Hannibal fasting.

At the irruption of the mob dismay seized the whole street; not a passer but had gone into eclipse. In a flash, at the end, on the right, on the left, shops, stalls, alley gates, windows, blinds, dormer windows, shutters of every size, were closed from the ground to the roofs. One frightened old woman had fixed a mattress before her window on two clothes-poles, as a shield against the musketry. The wine-shop was the only house which remained open; and that for a good reason, because the band had rushed into it. “Oh, my God! Oh, my God!” sighed Ma’am Hucheloup.

Bossuet had gone down to meet Courfeyrac.

Joly, who had come to the window, cried:



"Courfeyrac, you bust take ad ubbrella. You will catch cold."

Meanwhile, in a few minutes, twenty iron bars had been wrested from the grated front of the wine-shop, twenty yards of pavement had been torn up, Gavroche and Bahorel had seized on its passage and tipped over the dray of a lime merchant named Anceau; this dray contained three barrels full of lime, which they had placed under the piles of paving-stones; Enjolras had opened the trap-door of the cellar and all the widow Hucheloup's empty casks had gone to flank the lime barrels; Feuilly, with his fingers accustomed to color the delicate folds of fans, had buttressed the barrels and the dray with two massive heaps of stones. Stones, improvised like the rest and obtained nobody knows where. Some shoring-timbers had been pulled down from the front of a neighboring house and laid upon the casks. When Bossuet and Courfeyrac turned round, half the street was already barred by a rampart higher than a man. There is nothing like the popular hand to build whatever can be built by demolishing.

Chowder and Fricassee had joined the laborers. Fricassee went back and forth loaded with rubbish. Her weariness contributed to the barricade. She served paving-stones as she would have served wine, with a sleepy air.

An omnibus with two white horses passed at the end of the street.

Bossuet sprang over the pavement, ran, stopped the driver, made the passengers get down, gave his hand "to the ladies," dismissed the conductor, and came back with the vehicle, leading the horses by the bridle.

"An omnibus," said he, "doesn't pass by Corinth. *Non licet omnibus adire Corinthum.*"

A moment later the horses were unhitched and going off at will through the Rue Mondétour, and the omnibus, lying on its side, completed the barring of the street.

Ma'am Hucheloup, completely upset, had taken refuge in the first story.

Her eyes were wandering, and she looked without seeing, crying in a whisper. Her cries were dismayed and dared not come out of her throat.

"It is the end of the world," she murmured.

Joly deposited a kiss upon Ma'am Hucheloup's coarse, red, and wrinkled neck, and said to Grantaire: "My dear fellow, I have always considered a woman's neck an infinitely delicate thing."

But Grantaire was attaining the highest regions of dithyramb. Chowder having come up to the first floor, Grantaire seized her by the waist and pulled her toward the window with long bursts of laughter.

"Chowder is ugly!" cried he; "Chowder is the dream of ugliness! Chowder is a chimera. Listen to the secret of her birth: A Gothic Pygmalion, who was making cathedral water-spouts, fell in love with one of them one fine morning, the most horrible of all. He implored Love to animate her, and that made Chowder. Behold her, citizens! her hair is the color of chromate of lead, like that of Titian's mistress, and she is a good girl. I warrant you that she will fight well. Every good girl contains a hero. As for Mother Hucheloup, she is an old brave. Look at her mustaches! she inherited them from her husband. A hussaress, indeed, she will fight, too. They two by themselves will frighten the banlieue. Comrades, we will overturn the government, as true as there are fifteen acids intermediate between margaric acid and formic acid; which I don't care a fig about. Messieurs, my father always detested me, because I could not understand mathematics. I only understand love and liberty. I am Grantaire, a good boy. Never having had any money, I have never got used to it, and by that means I have never felt the need of it; but if I had been rich, there would have been no more poor! you should have seen. Oh! if the good hearts had the fat purses how much better everything would go. I imagine Jesus Christ with Rothschild's fortune. How much good he would have done! Chowder, embrace me! You are voluptuous and timid! you have cheeks which call for the kiss of a sister and lips which demand the kiss of a lover."

"Be still, wine cask!" said Courfeyrac.

Grantaire answered:

"I am Capitoul and Master of Floral Games!"

Enjolras, who was standing on the crest of the barricade, musket in hand, raised his fine austere face. Enjolras, we know, had something of the Spartan and of the

Puritan. He would have died at Thermopylæ with Leonidas, and would have burned Drogheda with Cromwell.

"Grantaire," cried he, "go sleep yourself sober; away from here. This is the place for intoxication and not for drunkenness. Do not dishonor the barricade!"

This angry speech produced upon Grantaire a singular effect. One would have said that he had received a glass of cold water in his face. He appeared suddenly sobered. He sat down, leaned upon a table near the window, looked at Enjolras with an inexpressible gentleness, and said to him:

"Let me sleep here."

"Go sleep elsewhere," cried Enjolras.

But Grantaire, keeping his tender and troubled eyes fixed upon him, answered:

"Let me sleep here—until I die here."

Enjolras regarded him with a disdainful eye:

"Grantaire, you are incapable of belief, of thought, of will, of life, and of death."

Grantaire replied with a grave voice:

"You will see."

He stammered out a few more unintelligible words, then his head fell heavily upon the table, and, a common effect of the second stage of inebriety into which Enjolras had rudely and suddenly pushed him, a moment later he was asleep.

#### IV

##### ATTEMPT AT CONSOLATION UPON THE WIDOW HUCHELOUP

**B**AHOREL, in ecstasies with the barricade, cried: "There is the street in a low neck! how well it looks!" Courfeyrac, even while helping to demolish the wine-shop, sought to console the widowed family.

"Mother Hucheloup, were you not complaining the other day that you had been summoned and fined because Fricassee had shaken a rug out of your window?"

"Yes, my good M. Courfeyrac. Oh, my God! are you going to put that table also into your horror? And besides that, for the rug, and also for the flower-pot which fell from the attic into the street, the government fined me 100 francs. If that isn't an abomination!"



"Well, Mother Hucheloup, we are avenging you."

Mother Hucheloup, in this reparation which they were making her, did not seem to very well understand her advantage. She was satisfied after the manner of that Arab woman who, having received a blow from her husband, went to complain to her father, crying for vengeance and saying: "Father, you owe my husband affront for affront." The father asked: "Upon which cheek did you receive the blow?" "Upon the left cheek." The father struck the right cheek, and said: "Now you are satisfied. Go and tell your husband that he has struck my daughter, but that I have struck his wife."

The rain had ceased. Recruits had arrived. Some workmen had brought under their blouses a keg of powder, a hamper containing bottles of vitriol, two or three carnival torches, and a basket full of lamps, "relics of the king's fête," which fête was quite recent, having taken place the 1st of May. It was said that these supplies came from a grocer of the Faubourg St. Antoine, named Pépin. They broke the only lamp in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the lamp opposite the Rue Saint Denis, and all the lamps in the surrounding streets—Mondétour, du Cygne, des Prêcheurs, and de la Grande and de la Petite Truanderie.

Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac directed everything. Two barricades were now building at the same time, both resting on the house of Corinth and making a right angle; the larger one closed the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the other closed the Rue Mondétour in the direction of the Rue du Cygne. This last barricade, very narrow, was constructed only of casks and paving-stones. There were about fifty laborers there, some thirty armed with muskets, for, on their way, they had effected a wholesale loan from an armorer's shop.

Nothing could be more fantastic and more motley than this band. One had a short jacket, a cavalry sabre, and two horse-pistols; another was in shirt-sleeves, with a round hat and a powder-horn hung at his side; a third had a breast-plate of nine sheets of brown paper and was armed with a saddler's awl. There was one of them who cried: "Let us exterminate to the last man and die on the point of our bayonets!" This man had no bayonet. Another

displayed over his coat a cross-belt and cartridge-box of the national guard, with the box cover adorned with this inscription in red cloth: "Public Order." Many muskets bearing the numbers of their legions, few hats, no cravats, many bare arms, some pikes. Add to this all ages, all faces, small, pale young men, bronzed wharfmen. All were hurrying; and, while helping each other, they talked about the possible chances—that they would have help by three o'clock in the morning—that they were sure of one regiment—that Paris would rise. Terrible subjects, with which were mingled a sort of cordial joviality. One would have said they were brothers; they did not know each other's names. Great perils have this beauty—that they bring to light the fraternity of strangers.

A fire had been kindled in the kitchen and they were melting pitchers, dishes, forks, all the pewter ware of the wine-shop into bullets. They drank through it all. Percussion-caps and buckshot rolled pell-mell upon the tables with glasses of wine. In the billiard-room Ma'am Hucheloup, Chowder, and Fricassee, variously modified by terror, one being stupefied, another breathless, the third alert, were tearing up old linen and making lint; three insurgents assisted them, three long-haired, bearded, and mustached wags, who tore up the cloth with the fingers of a linen-draper and who made them tremble.

The man of tall stature whom Courfeyrac, Combeferre, and Enjolras had noticed at the moment he joined the company at the corner of the Rue des Billettes, was working on the little barricade and making himself useful there. Gavroche worked on the large one. As for the young man who had waited for Courfeyrac at his house and had asked him for M. Marius, he had disappeared very nearly at the moment the omnibus was overturned.

Gavroche, completely carried away and radiant, had charged himself with making all ready. He went, came, mounted, descended, remounted, bustled, sparkled. He seemed to be there for the encouragement of all. Had he a spur? Yes, certainly, his misery; had he wings? yes, certainly, his joy. Gavroche was a whirlwind. They saw him incessantly, they heard him constantly. He filled the air, being everywhere at once. He was a kind of stimulating ubiquity; no stop possible with him. The enormous

barricade felt him on its back. He vexed the loungers, he excited the idle, he reanimated the weary, he provoked the thoughtful, kept some in cheerfulness, others in breath, others in anger, all in motion, piqued a student, was biting to a workingman; took position, stopped, started on, flitted above the tumult and the effort, leaped from these to those, murmured, hummed, and stirred up the whole train; the fly on the revolutionary coach.

Perpetual motion was in his little arms and perpetual clamor in his little lungs.

"Cheerily? More paving-stones! More barrels! More machines! Where are there any? A basket of plaster to stop that hole. It is too small, your barricade. It must go higher. Pile on everything, brace it with everything. Break up the house. A barricade is Mother Gibou's tea-party. Hold on, there is a glass-door."

This made the laborers exclaim:

"A glass-door? What do you want us to do with a glass-door, tubercle?"

"Hercules yourselves!" retorted Gavroche. "A glass-door in a barricade is excellent. It doesn't prevent attacking it, but it bothers them in taking it. Then you have never hooked apples over a wall with broken bottles on it? A glass-door, it will cut the corns of the national guards when they try to climb over the barricade. Golly! glass is the devil. Ah, now, you haven't an unbridled imagination, my comrades."

Still he was furious at his pistol without a hammer. He went from one to another, demanding: "A musket! I want a musket! Why don't you give me a musket?"

"A musket for you?" said Combeferre.

"Well?" replied Gavroche, "why not? I had one in 1830, in the dispute with Charles X."

Enjolras shrugged his shoulders.

"When there are enough for the men we will give them to the children."

Gavroche turned fiercely and answered him:

"If you are killed before me I will take yours."

"*Gamin!*" said Enjolras.

"Smooth-face!" said Gavroche.

A stray dandy who was lounging at the end of the street made a diversion.



Gavroche cried to him:

"Come with us, young man! Well, this poor old country, you won't do anything for her, then?"

The dandy fled.

## V

### THE PREPARATIONS

THE journals of the time which said that the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, that "almost inexpugnable construction," as they call it, attained the level of a second story, were mistaken. The fact is, that it did not exceed an average height of six or seven feet. It was built in such a manner that the combatants could, at will, either disappear behind the wall, or look over it, and even scale the crest of it by means of a quadruple range of paving-stones superposed and arranged like steps on the inner side. The front of the barricade on the outside, composed of piles of paving-stones and of barrels bound together by timbers and boards which were interlocked in the wheels of the Anceau cart and the overturned omnibus, had a bristling and inextricable aspect.

An opening sufficient for a man to pass through had been left between the wall of the houses and the extremity of the barricade furthest from the wine-shop, so that a sortie was possible. The pole of the omnibus was turned directly up and held with ropes, and a red flag fixed to this pole floated over the barricade.

The little Mondétour barricade, hidden behind the wine-shop, was not visible. The two barricades united formed a stanch redoubt. Enjolras and Courfeyrac had not thought proper to barricade the other end of the Rue Mondétour, which opens a passage to the markets through the Rue des Prêcheurs, wishing doubtless to preserve a possible communication with the outside, and having little dread of being attacked from the dangerous and difficult Alley des Prêcheurs.

Except this passage remaining free, which constituted what Folard, in his strategic style, would have called a branch-trench, and bearing in mind also the narrow opening arranged on the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the interior of the barricade, where the wine-shop made a salient angle,

presented an irregular quadrilateral closed on all sides. There was an interval of about twenty yards between the great barricade and the tall houses which formed the end of the street, so that we might say it was erected in less than an hour, and without this handful of bold men seeing a bearskin-cap or a bayonet arise. The few bourgeois who still ventured at that period of the émeute into the Rue Saint Denis cast a glance down the Rue de la Chanvrerie, perceived the barricade, and redoubled their pace.

The two barricades finished, the flag run up, a table was dragged out of the wine-shop, and Courfeyrac mounted upon the table. Enjolras brought the square box and Courfeyrac opened it. This box was filled with cartridges. When they saw the cartridges there was a shudder among the bravest and a moment of silence.

Courfeyrac distributed them with a smile.

Each one received thirty cartridges. Many had powder and set about making others with the balls which they were molding. As for the keg of powder, it was on a table by itself near the door and it was reserved.

The long-roll which was running through all Paris was not discontinued, but it had got to be only a monotonous sound to which they paid no more attention. This sound sometimes receded, sometimes approached, with melancholy undulations.

They loaded their muskets and their carbines all together, without precipitation, with a solemn gravity. Enjolras placed three sentinels outside the barricades, one in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, the second in the Rue des Prêcheurs, the third at the corner of La Petite Truanderie.

Then, the barricades built, the posts assigned, the muskets loaded, the videttes placed, alone in these fearful streets in which there were now no passers, surrounded by these dumb, and as it were dead houses, which throbbed with no human motion, inwrapped by the deepening shadows of the twilight, which was begining to fall—in the midst of this obscurity and this silence, through which they felt the advance of something inexpressibly tragical and terrifying, isolated, armed, determined, tranquil, they waited.

## VI

## WHILE WAITING

**I**N these hours of waiting what did they do? This we must tell—for this is history.

While the men were making cartridges and the women lint, while a large frying-pan, full of melted pewter and lead, destined for the bullet-mold, was smoking over a burning furnace, while the videttes were watching the barricades with arms in their hands, while Enjolras, whom nothing could distract, was watching the videttes, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Feuilly, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, a few others besides, sought each other and got together, as in the most peaceful days of their student-chats, and in a corner of this wine-shop changed into a casemate, within two steps of the redoubt which they had thrown up, their carbines primed and loaded, resting on the backs of their chairs, these gallant young men, so near their last hour, began to sing love-rhymes.

What rhymes? Here they are:

“Vous rappelez-vous notre douce vie,  
Lorsque nous étions si jeunes tous deux,  
Et que nous n’avions au cœur d’autre envie  
Que d’être bien mis et d’être amoureux.

“Lorsqu’en ajoutant votre âge à mon âge,  
Nous ne comptions pas à deux quarante ans,  
Et que, dans notre humble et petit ménage,  
Tout, même l’hiver, nous était printemps?

“Beaux jours! Manuel était fier et sage,  
Paris s’asseyait à de saints banquets,  
Foy lançait la foudre, et votre corsage  
Avait une épingle où je me piquais.

“Tout vous contemplait. Avocat sans causes,  
Quand je vous menais au Prado diner,  
Vous étiez jolie au point que les roses  
Me faisaient l’effet de se retourner.

“Je les entendais dire: Est-elle belle!  
Comme elle sent bon! quels cheveux à flots!  
Sous son mantelet elle cache une aile;  
Son bonnet charmant est à peine éclos.



“J’errais avec toi, pressant ton bros souple.  
Les pessants croyaient que l’amour charme,  
Avait marié, dans notre heureux couple,  
Le doux mois d’avril au beau mois de mai.

“Nous vivions cachés, contents, porte close,  
Dévorant l’amour, bon fruit défendu;  
Ma bouche n’avait pas dit une chose  
Que déjà ton cœur avait répondu.

“La Sorbonne était l’endroit bucolique  
Où je t’adorais du soir au matin.  
C’est ainsi qu’une âme amoureuse applique  
La carte du Tendre au pays Latin.

“O place Maubert! O place Dauphine!  
Quand, dans le taudis frais et printanier,  
Tu tirais ton bas sur ta jambe fine,  
Je voyais un astre au fond du grenier.

“J’ai fort lu Platon, mais rien ne m’en reste.  
Mieux que Malebranche et que Lamennais  
Tu me démontrais la bonté céleste  
Avec une fleur que tu me donnais.

“Je t’obéissais, tu m’étais soumise.  
O grenier doré! te lacer! te voir  
Aller et venir dès l’aube en chemise,  
Mirant ton front jeune à ton vieux miroir!

“Et qui donc pourrait perdre la mémoire  
De ces temps d’aurore et de firmament,  
De rubans, de fleurs, de gaze et de moirs.  
Dù l’amour bégaye un argot charmant?

“Jos jardins étaient un pot de tulipe;  
Tu masquais la vitre avec un jupon;  
Je prenais le bol de terre de pipe,  
Et je te donnais la tasse en japon.

“Et ces grands malheurs qui nous faisaient rire!  
Ton Manchon brûlé, ton boa perdu!  
Et ce cher portrait du divan Shakspeare  
Qu’un soir pour soupèr nous avons vendu!

“J’étais mendiant, et toi charitable  
Je baisais au vol tes bras frais et ronds.  
Danté in-folio nous servait de table  
Pour manger gaiment un cent de marrons.

“Le première fois qu’en mon joyeux bouge,  
 Je pris un baiser à ta lèvre en feu,  
 Quand tu t’en allas décoiffée et rouge,  
 Je restai tout pâle et je crus en Dieu!

“Te rapples-tu nos bonheurs sans nombre,  
 Et tous ces fichus changés en chiffons?  
 Oh! que de soupirs, de nos cœurs pleins d’ombre,  
 Se sont envolés dans les cieus profonds!”

The hour, the place, these memories of youth recalled, the few stars which began to shine in the sky, the funereal repose of these deserted streets, the imminence of the inexorable event, gave a pathetic charm to these rhymes, murmured in a low tone in the twilight by Jean Prouvaire, who, as we have said, was a sweet poet.

Meanwhile, they had lighted a little lamp at the little barricade, and, at the large one, one of those wax torches which are seen on Mardi Gras in front of the wagons loaded with masks, which are going to the Comtille. These torches, we have seen, came from the Faubourg St. Antoine.

The torch had been placed in a kind of cage, closed in with paving-stones on three sides, to shelter it from the wind, and disposed in such a manner that all the light fell upon the flag. The street and the barricade remained plunged in obscurity, and nothing could be seen but the red flag, fearfully lighted up, as if by an enormous dark lantern.

This light gave to the scarlet of the flag an indescribably terrible purple.

## VII

### THE MAN RECRUITED IN THE RUE DES BILLETES

IT was now quite night, nothing came. There were only confused sounds and at intervals volleys of musketry; but rare, ill-sustained, and distant. This respite, which was thus prolonged, was a sign that the government was taking its time and massing its forces. These fifty men were awaiting 60,000.

Enjolras felt himself possessed by that impatience which seizes strong souls on the threshold of formidable events.

He went to find Gavroche, who had set himself to making cartridges in the basement-room by the doubtful light of two candles, placed upon the counter through precaution on account of the powder scattered over the tables. These two candles threw no rays outside. The insurgents, moreover, had taken care not to have any lights in the upper stories.

Gavroche at this moment was very much engaged, not exactly with his cartridges.

The man from the Rue des Billettes had just entered the basement-room and had taken a seat at the table which was least lighted. An infantry musket of large model had fallen to his lot and he held it between his knees. Gavroche, hitherto distracted by one hundred "amusing" things, had not even seen this man.

When he came in, Gavroche mechanically followed him with his eyes, admiring his musket, then, suddenly, when the man had sat down, the *gamin* arose. Had any one watched this man up to this time he would have seen him observe everything in the barricade and in the band of insurgents with a singular attention; but since he had come into the room he had fallen into a kind of meditation and appeared to see nothing more of what was going on. The *gamin* approached this thoughtful personage, and began to turn about him on the points of his toes, as one walks when near somebody whom he fears to awaken. At the same time, over his childish face, at once so saucy and so serious, so flighty and so profound, so cheerful and so touching, there passed all those grimaces of the old which signify: "Oh, bah! Impossible! I am befogged! I am dreaming! Can it be? No, it isn't! Why, yes! Why, no!" etc. Gavroche balanced himself upon his heels, clinched both fists in his pockets, twisted his neck like a bird, expended in one measureless pout all the sagacity of his lower lip. He was stupefied, uncertain, credulous, convinced, bewildered. He had the appearance of the chief of the eunuchs in the slave market discovering a Venus among dumpies, and the air of an amateur recognizing a "Raphael" in a heap of daubs. Everything in him was at work, the instinct which scents and the intellect which combines. It was evident that an event had occurred with Gavroche.



It was in the deepest of this meditation that Enjolras accosted him.

"You are small," said Enjolras, "nobody will see you. Go out of the barricades, glide along by the houses, look about the streets a little, and come and tell me what is going on."

Gavroche straightened himself up.

"Little folks are good for something, then! that is very lucky! I will go! Meantime, trust the little folks, distrust the big—" And Gavroche, raising his head and lowering his voice, added, pointing to the man of the Rue des Billettes:

"You see that big fellow there?"

"Well?"

"He is a spy."

"You are sure?"

"It isn't a fortnight since he pulled me by the ear off the cornice of the Pont Royal, where I was taking the air."

Enjolras hastily left the *gamin* and murmured a few words very low to a workingman from the wine docks who was there. The workingman went out of the room and returned almost immediately, accompanied by three others. The four men, four broad-shouldered porters, placed themselves, without doing anything which could attract his attention, behind the table on which the man of the Rue des Billettes was leaning. They were evidently ready to throw themselves upon him.

Then Enjolras approached the man and asked him:

"Who are you?"

At this abrupt question the man gave a start. He looked straight to the bottom of Enjolras' frank eye and appeared to catch his thought. He smiled with a smile which, of all things in the world, was the most disdainful, the most energetic, and the most resolute, and answered with a haughty gravity:

"I see how it is—well, yes!"

"You are a spy?"

"I am an officer of the government."

"Your name is—"

"Javert."

Enjolras made a sign to the four men. In a twinkling,

before Javert had had time to turn around, he was collared, thrown down, bound, searched.

They found upon him a little round card framed between two glasses, and bearing on one side the arms of France, engraved with this legend: "*Surveillance et vigilance*," and on the other side this indorsement: "JAVERT, inspector of police, aged 52," and the signature of the prefect of police of the time, M. Gisquet.

He had, besides, his watch and his purse, which contained a few gold pieces. They left him his purse and his watch. Under the watch, at the bottom of his fob, they felt and seized a paper in an envelope, which Enjolras opened, and on which he read these lines, written by the prefect's own hand:

"As soon as his political mission is fulfilled, Inspector Javert will ascertain, by a special examination, whether it be true that malefactors have resorts on the slope of the right bank of the Seine, near the bridge of Jena."

The search finished, they raised Javert, tied his arms behind his back, and fastened him in the middle of the basement-room to that celebrated post which had formerly given its name to the wine-shop.

Gavroche, who had witnessed the whole scene and approved the whole by silent nods of his head, approached Javert and said to him:

"The mouse has caught the cat."

All this was executed so rapidly that it was finished as soon as it was perceived about the wine-shop. Javert had not uttered a cry. Seeing Javert tied to the post, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Combeferre, and the men scattered about the two barricades ran in.

Javert, backed up against the post, and so surrounded with ropes that he could make no movement, held up his head with the intrepid serenity of the man who has never lied.

"It is a spy," said Enjolras.

And turning toward Javert:

"You will be shot ten minutes before the barricade is taken."

Javert replied in his most imperious tone:

"Why not immediately?"

"We are economizing powder."

"Then do it with a knife."

"Spy," said the handsome Enjolras, "we are judges, not assassins."

Then he called Gavroche.

"You! go about your business! Do what I told you."

"I am going," cried Gavroche.

And stopping just as he was starting:

"By the way, you will give me his musket!" And he added: "I leave you the musician, but I want the clarionet."

The *gamin* made a military salute and sprang gayly through the opening in the large barricade.

## VIII

SEVERAL INTERROGATION POINTS CONCERNING ONE LE CABUC, WHO, PERHAPS, WAS NOT LE CABUC

THE tragic picture which we have commenced would not be complete, the reader would not see in their exact and real relief these grand moments of social parturition and of revolutionary birth in which there is convulsion mingled with effort, were we to omit, in the outline here sketched, an incident full of epic and savage horror which occurred almost immediately after Gavroche's departure.

Mobs, as we know, are like snowballs, and gather a heap of tumultuous men as they roll. These men do not ask one another whence they come. Among the passers who had joined themselves to the company led by Enjolras, Combeferre, and Courfeyrac there was a person wearing a porter's waistcoat worn out at the shoulders, who gesticulated and vociferated and had the appearance of a sort of savage drunkard. This man, who was named or nicknamed Le Cabuc, and who was, moreover, entirely unknown to those who attempted to recognize him, very drunk, or feigning to be, was seated with a few others at a table which they had brought outside of the wine-shop. This Cabuc, while inciting those to drink who were with him, seemed to gaze with an air of reflection upon the large house at the back of the barricade, the five stories of which overlooked the whole street and faced toward the Rue Saint Denis. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Comrades, do you know? It is from that house that



we must fire. If we are at the windows devil a one can come into the street."

"Yes; but the house is shut up," said one of the drinkers.

"Knock!"

"They won't open."

"Stave the door in!"

Le Cabuc runs to the door; which had a very massive knocker, and raps. The door does not open. He raps a second time. Nobody answers. A third rap. The same silence.

"Is there anybody here?" cries Le Cabuc.

Nothing stirs.

Then he seizes a musket and begins to beat the door with the butt. It was an old alley door; arched, low; narrow, solid; entirely of oak, lined on the inside with sheet-iron and with iron braces, a genuine postern of a bastille. The blows made the house tremble, but did not shake the door.

Nevertheless, it is probable that the inhabitants were alarmed; for they finally saw a little square window on the third story light up and open; and there appeared at this window a candle and the pious and frightened face of a gray-haired good man who was the porter:

The man who was knocking stopped.

"Messieurs," asked the porter, "what do you wish?"

"Open!" said Le Cabuc:

"Messieurs; that can not be."

"Open, I tell you."

"Impossible, messieurs!"

Le Cabuc took his musket and aimed at the porter's head; but as he was below and it was very dark the porter did not see him.

"Yes or no, will you open?"

"No, messieurs."

"You say no?"

"I say no, my good—"

The porter did not finish. The musket went off; the ball entered under his chin and passed out at the back of the neck, passing through the jugular. The old man sank down without a sigh. The candle fell and was extinguished, and nothing could now be seen but an immovable head lying on the edge of the window and a little whitish smoke floating toward the roof.

"That's it!" said Le Cabuc, letting the butt of his musket drop on the pavement.

Hardly had he uttered these words when he felt a hand pounce upon his shoulder with the weight of an eagle's talons and heard a voice which said to him:

"On your knees."

The murderer turned and saw before him the white, cold face of Enjolras. Enjolras had a pistol in his hand.

At the explosion he had come up.

He had grasped with his left hand Le Cabuc's collar, blouse, shirt, and suspenders.

"On your knees," repeated he.

And with a majestic movement the slender young man of twenty bent the broad-shouldered and robust porter like a reed and made him kneel in the mud. Le Cabuc tried to resist, but he seemed to have been seized by a superhuman grasp.

Pale, his neck bare, his hair flying, Enjolras, with his woman's face, had at that moment an inexpressible something of the ancient Themis. His distended nostrils, his downcast eyes, gave to his implacable Greek profile that expression of wrath and that expression of chastity which, from the point of view of the ancient world, belonged to justice.

The whole barricade ran up, then all ranged in a circle at a distance, feeling that it was impossible to utter a word in presence of the act which they were about to witness.

Le Cabuc, vanquished, no longer attempted to defend himself, but trembled in every limb. Enjolras let go of him and took out his watch.

"Collect your thoughts," said he. "Pray or think. You have one minute."

"Pardon!" murmured the murderer, then he bowed his head and mumbled some inarticulate oaths.

Enjolras did not take his eyes off his watch; he let the minute pass, then he put his watch back into his fob. This done, he took Le Cabuc, who was writhing against his knee and howling, by the hair and placed the muzzle of his pistol at his ear. Many of those intrepid men, who had so tranquilly entered upon the most terrible of enterprises, turned away their heads.

They heard the explosion, the assassin fell face forward

on the pavement, and Enjolras straightened up and cast about him his look, determined and severe.

Then he pushed the body away with his foot, and said: "Throw that outside."

Three men lifted the body of the wretch, which was quivering with the last mechanical convulsions of the life that had flown, and threw it over the small barricade into the little Rue Mondétour.

Enjolras had remained thoughtful. Shadow, mysterious and grand, was slowly spreading over his fearful serenity. He suddenly raised his voice. There was a silence.

"Citizens," said Enjolras, "what that man did is horrible, and what I have done is terrible. He killed, that is why I killed him. I was forced to do it, for the insurrection must have its discipline. Assassination is a still greater crime here than elsewhere; we are under the eye of the Revolution, we are the priests of the Republic, we are the sacramental host of duty, and none must be able to calumniate our combat. I, therefore, judged and condemned that man to death. As for myself, compelled to do what I have done, but abhorring it, I have judged myself also, and you shall soon see to what I have sentenced myself."

Those who heard shuddered.

"We will share your fate," cried Combeferre.

"So be it," added Enjolras. "A word more. In executing that man I obeyed necessity; but necessity is a monster of the whole world, the name of necessity is fatality. Now, the law of progress is, that monsters disappear before angels, and that fatality vanishes before fraternity. This is not a moment to pronounce the word love. No matter, I pronounce it, and I glorify it. Love, thine is the future. Death, I use thee, but I hate thee. Citizens, there shall be in the future neither darkness nor thunderbolts; neither ferocious ignorance nor blood for blood. As Satan shall be no more, so Michael shall be no more. In the future no man shall slay his fellow, the earth shall be radiant, the human race shall love. It will come, citizens, that day when all shall be concord, harmony, light, joy, and life; it will come, and it is that it may come that we are going to die."

Enjolras was silent. His virgin lips closed; and he re-



mained some time standing on the spot where he had spilled blood, in marble immobility. His fixed eyes made all about him speak low.

Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre silently grasped hands, and, leaning upon one another in the corner of the barricade, considered, with an admiration not unmingled with compassion, this severe young man, executioner and priest, luminous like the crystal, and rock also.

Let us say right here that later, after the action, when the corpses were carried to the morgue and searched, there was a police officer's card found on Le Cabuc. The author of this book had in his own hands, in 1848, the special report made on that subject to the prefect of police in 1832.

Let us add that, if we are to believe a police tradition, strange, but probably well founded, Le Cabuc was Claquesous. The fact is, that after the death of Le Cabuc nothing more was heard of Claquesous. Claquesous left no trace on his disappearance; he would seem to have been amalgamated with the invisible. His life had been darkness, his end was night.

The whole insurgent group were still under the emotion of this tragic trial, so quickly instituted and so quickly terminated, when Courfeyrac again saw in the barricade the small young man who in the morning had called at his house for Marius.

This boy, who had a bold and reckless air, had come at night to rejoin the insurgents.

## BOOK THIRTEENTH—MARIUS ENTERS THE SHADOW

### I

FROM THE RUE PLUMET TO THE QUARTIER SAINT DENIS

**T**HAT voice which through the twilight had called Marius to the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrière sounded to him like the voice of destiny. He wished to die, the opportunity presented itself; he was knocking at the door of the tomb, a hand in the shadow held out the key. These dreary clefts in the darkness before despair

are tempting. Marius pushed aside the bar which had let him pass so many times, came out of the garden, and said: "Let us go!"

Mad with grief, feeling no longer anything fixed or solid in his brain, incapable of accepting anything henceforth from fate, after these two months passed in the intoxications of youth and of love,whelmed at once beneath all the reveries of despair, he had now but one desire—to make an end of it very quickly.

He began to walk rapidly. It happened that he was armed, having Javert's pistols with him.

The young man whom he thought he had seen was lost from his eyes in the streets.

Marius, who had left the Rue Plumet by the boulevard, crossed the Esplanade and the bridge of the Invalides, the Champs Elysées, the Place Louis XV, and entered the Rue de Rivoli. The stores were open, the gas was burning under the arches, women were buying in the shops, people were taking ices at the Café Laiter; they were eating little cakes at the Pâtisserie Anglaise. However, a few post-chaises were setting off at a gallop from the Hôtel des Princes and the Hôtel Meurice.

Marius entered through the Delorme arcade into the Rue St. Honoré. The shops here were closed, the merchants were chatting before their half-open doors, people were moving about, the lamps were burning above the first stories, all the windows were lighted as usual. There was cavalry in the square of the Palais Royal.

Marius followed the Rue St. Honoré. As he receded from the Palais Royal there were fewer lighted windows; the shops were entirely closed, nobody was chatting in the doors, the street grew gloomy, and at the same time the throng grew dense. For the passers now were a throng. Nobody was seen to speak in this throng, and still there came from it a deep and dull hum.

Toward the Fontaine de l'Arbre Sec, there were "gatherings," immovable and sombre groups, which, among the comers and goers, were like stones in the middle of a running stream.

At the entrance of the Rue des Prouvaires the throng no longer moved. It was a resisting, massive, solid, compact, almost impenetrable block of people, heaped to-

gether and talking in whispers. Black coats and round hats had almost disappeared. Frocks, blouses, caps, bristly and dirty faces. This multitude undulated confusedly in the misty night. Its whispering had the harsh sound of a roar. Although nobody was walking, a trampling was heard in the mud. Beyond this dense mass, in the Rue du Roule, in the Rue des Prouvaires, and in the prolongation of the Rue St. Honoré, there was not a single window in which a candle was burning. In those streets the files of the lamps were seen stretching away solitary and decreasing. The lamps of that day resembled great red stars hanging from ropes, and threw a shadow on the pavement, which had the form of a large spider. These streets were not empty. Muskets could be distinguished in stacks, bayonets moving and troops bivouacking. The curious did not pass this bound. There circulation ceased. There the multitude ended and the army began.

Marius willed with the will of a man who no longer hopes. He had been called, he must go. He found means to pass through the multitude and to pass through the bivouac of the troops, he avoided the patrols, evaded the sentinels. He made a detour, reached the Rue de Béthisy, and made his way toward the markets. At the corner of the Rue des Bourdonnais the lamps ended.

After having crossed the belt of the multitude and passed the fringe of troops he found himself in the midst of something terrible. Not a passer more, not a soldier, not a light; nobody. Solitude, silence, night; a mysterious chill which seized upon him. To enter a street was to enter a cellar.

He continued to advance.

He took a few steps. Somebody passed near him, running. Was it a man? a woman? were there several? He could not have told. It had passed and had vanished.

By a circuitous route he came to a little street, which he judged to be the Rue de la Poterie; about the middle of this alley he ran against some obstacle. He put out his hands. It was an overturned cart; his foot recognized puddles of water, mud-holes, paving-stones scattered and heaped up. A barricade had been planned there and abandoned. He climbed over the stones and found himself on the other side of the obstruction. He walked very near



the posts and guided himself by the walls of the houses. A little beyond the barricade, he seemed to catch a glimpse of something white in front of him. He approached, it took form. It was two white horses; the omnibus horses unharnessed by Bossuet in the morning, which had wandered at chance from street to street all day long, and had finally stopped there, with the exhausted patience of brutes, who no more comprehend the ways of man than man comprehends the ways of Providence.

Marius left the horses behind him. As he came to a street which struck him as being the Rue du Contrat Social, a shot from a musket, coming nobody knows whence, passed at random through the obscurity, whistled close by him, and the ball pierced a copper shaving-dish suspended before a barber's shop. This shaving-dish with the bullet-hole could still be seen, in 1846, in the Rue du Contrat Social, at the corner of the pillars of the markets.

This musket-shot was life still. From that moment he met nothing more.

This whole route resembled a descent down dark stairs.

Marius none the less went forward.

## II

### PARIS—AN OWL'S-EYE VIEW

**A** BEING who could have soared above Paris at that moment with the wing of the bat or the owl would have had a gloomy spectacle beneath his eyes.

All that old quartier of the markets, which is like a city within the city, which is traversed by the Rues Saint Denis and St. Martin, where a thousand little streets cross each other, and of which the insurgents had made their stronghold and their field of arms, would have appeared to him like an enormous black hole dug out in the centre of Paris. There the eye fell into an abyss. Thanks to the broken lamps, thanks to the closed windows, there ceased all radiance, all life, all sound, all motion. The invisible police of the émeute watched everywhere and maintained order, that is, night. To drown the smallness of their number in a vast obscurity and to multiply each combatant by the possibilities which that obscurity contains, are the neces-

sary tactics of insurrection. At nightfall every window in which a candle was lighted had received a ball. The light was extinguished, sometimes the inhabitant killed. Thus nothing stirred. There was nothing there but fright, mourning, stupor in the houses; in the streets a sort of sacred horror. Even the long ranges of windows and of stories were not perceptible, the notching of the chimneys and the roofs, the dim reflections which gleam on the wet and muddy pavement. The eye which might have looked from above into that mass of shade would have caught a glimpse here and there, perhaps, from point to point, of indistinct lights, bringing out broken and fantastic lines, outlines of singular constructions, something like ghostly gleams, coming and going among ruins; these were the barricades. The rest was a lake of obscurity, misty, heavy, funereal, above which rose, motionless and dismal silhouettes, the tower St. Jacques, the church St. Merry, and two or three others of those great buildings of which man makes giants and of which night makes phantoms.

All about this deserted and disquieting labyrinth, in the quarters where the circulation of Paris was not stopped, and where a few rare lamps shone out, the aerial observer might have distinguished the metallic scintillation of sabres and bayonets, the sullen rumbling of artillery, and the swarming of silent battalions augmenting from moment to moment; a formidable girdle which was tightening and slowly closing about the émeute.

The invested quartier was now only a sort of monstrous cavern; everything in it appeared to be sleeping or motionless, and, as we have just seen, none of the streets on which you might have entered offered anything but darkness.

A savage darkness, full of snares, full of unknown and formidable encounters, where it was fearful to penetrate and appalling to stay; where those who entered shuddered before those who were awaiting them; where those who waited trembled before those who were to come. Invisible combatants intrenched at every street corner; the grave hidden in ambush in the thickness of the night. It was finished. No other light to be hoped for there henceforth save the flash of musketry; no other meeting save the sudden and rapid apparition of death. Where? how? when?

Nobody knew; but it was certain and inevitable. There in that place marked out for the contest, the government and the insurrection, the national guard and the popular societies, the bourgeoisie and the émeute, were to grope their way. For those as for these the necessity was the same. To leave that place slain or victors the only possible issue henceforth. A situation so extreme, an obscurity so overpowering, that the most timid felt themselves filled with resolution and the boldest with terror.

Moreover, on both sides fury, rancor, equal determination. For those to advance was to die, and nobody thought of retreat; for these to stay was to die, and nobody thought of flight.

All must be decided on the morrow; the triumph must be on this side or on that, the insurrection must be a revolution or a blunder. The government understood it as well as the factions; the least bourgeois felt it. Hence a feeling of anguish, which mingled with the impenetrable darkness of this quartier, where all was to be decided; hence a redoubling of anxiety about this silence whence a catastrophe was to issue. But one sound could be heard, a sound heartrending as a death-rattle, menacing as a malediction, the tocsin of St. Merry. Nothing was so blood-chilling as the clamor of this wild and desperate bell wailing in the darkness.

As often happens, nature seemed to have put herself in accord with what men were about to do. Nothing disturbed the funereal harmonies of that whole. The stars had disappeared; heavy clouds filled the whole horizon with their melancholy folds. There was a black sky over those dead streets, as if an immense pall had unfolded itself over that immense tomb.

While a battle, as yet entirely political, was preparing in this same locality, which had already seen so many revolutionary events; while the youth, the secret associations, the schools, in the name of principles, and the middle class, in the name of interests, were approaching to dash against each other, to close with and to overthrow each other; while each was hurrying and calling the final and decisive hour of the crisis, afar off and outside of that fatal quartier, in the deepest of the unfathomable caverns of that old, miserable Paris, which is disappearing under the splendor



of the happy and opulent Paris, the gloomy voice of the people was heard sullenly growling.

A fearful and sacred voice, which is composed of the roar of the brute and the speech of God, which terrifies the feeble and which warns the wise; which comes at the same time from below like the voice of the lion, and from above like the voice of the thunder.

### III

#### THE EXTREME LIMIT

MARIUS had arrived at the markets.

There all was more calm, more obscure, and more motionless still than in the neighboring streets. One would have said that the icy peace of the grave had come forth from the earth and spread over the sky.

A red glare, however, cut out upon this dark background the high roofs of the houses which barred the Rue de la Chanvrière on the side toward St. Eustache. It was the reflection of the torch which was blazing in the barricade of Corinth. Marius directed his steps toward this glare. It led him to the beet market, and he dimly saw the dark mouth of the Rue des Prêcheurs. He entered it. The vidette of the insurgents who was on guard at the other end did not perceive him. He felt that he was very near what he had come to seek, and he walked upon tiptoe. He reached in this way the elbow of that short end of the Rue Mondétour which was, as we remember, the only communication preserved by Enjolras with the outside. Around the corner of the last house on his left, cautiously advancing his head, he looked into this end of the Rue Mondétour.

A little beyond the black corner of the alley and the Rue de la Chanvrière, which threw a broad shadow in which he was himself buried, he perceived a light upon the pavement, a portion of the wine-shop, and behind a lamp twinkling in a kind of shapeless wall and men crouching down with muskets on their knees. All this was within twenty yards of him. It was the interior of the barricade.

The houses on the right of the alley hid from him the rest of the wine-shop, the great barricade and the flag.

Marius had but one step more to take.

Then the unhappy young man sat down upon a stone, folded his arms and thought of his father.

He thought of that heroic Colonel Pontmercy who had been so brave a soldier, who had defended the frontier of France under the Republic and reached the frontier of Asia under the Emperor, who had seen Genoa, Alessandria, Milan, Turin, Madrid, Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, Moscow, who had left upon every field of victory in Europe drops of that same blood which he, Marius, had in his veins, who had grown gray before his time in discipline and in command, who had lived with his sword-belt buckled, his epaulets falling on his breast, his cockade blackened by powder, his forehead wrinkled by the cap, in the barracks, in the camp, in the bivouac, in the ambulance, and who, after twenty years, had returned from the great wars with his cheeks scarred, his face smiling, simple, tranquil, admirable, pure as a child, having done everything for France and nothing against her.

He said to himself that his day had come to him also, that his hour had at last struck, that after his father he also was to be brave, intrepid, bold, to run amid bullets, to bare his breast to the bayonets, to pour out his blood, to seek the enemy, to seek death, that he was to wage war in his turn and to enter upon the field of battle, and that field of battle upon which he was about to enter was the street, and that war which he was about to wage was civil war.

He saw civil war yawning like an abyss before him, and that in it he was to fall.

Then he shuddered.

He thought of that sword of his father which his grandfather had sold to a junk-shop and which he himself had so painfully regretted. He said to himself that it was well that the chaste and valiant sword had escaped from him and gone off in anger into the darkness; that if it had fled thus it was because it was intelligent and because it foresaw the future; because it foreboded the émeute, the war of the gutters, the war of the pavements, the firing from cellar windows, blows given and received from behind; because, coming from Marengo and Friedland, it would not go to the Rue de la Chanvrerie: because after

what it had done with the father it would not do this with the son. He said to himself that if that sword were there, if, having received it from the bedside of his dead father, he had dared to take it and bring it away for this night combat between Frenchmen at the street corners, most surely it would have burned his hands and flamed before him like the sword of the angel. He said to himself that it was fortunate that it was not there and that it had disappeared, that it was well, that it was just, that his grandfather had been the true guardian of his father's glory, and that it was better that the colonel's sword had been cried at auction, sold to a dealer, thrown among old iron, than that it should be used to-day to pierce the side of the country.

And then he began to weep bitterly.

It was horrible. But what could he do? Live without Cosette he could not. Since she had gone away he must surely die. Had he not given her his word of honor that he should die? She had gone away knowing that; therefore it pleased her that Marius should die. And then it was clear that she no longer loved him, since she had gone away thus without notifying him, without a word, without a letter, and she knew his address. What use in life and why live longer? And then, indeed, to have come so far and to recoil! to have approached the danger and to flee! to have come and looked into the barricade and to slink away! to slink away all trembling, saying: "In fact, I have had enough of this; I have seen, that is sufficient, it is civil war; I am going away!" To abandon his friends who were expecting him, who, perhaps, had need of him, who were a handful against an army! To fail in all things at the same time, in his love, his friendship, his word! To give his poltroonery the pretext of patriotism! But this was impossible, and if his father's ghost were there in the shadow and saw him recoil he would strike him with the flat of his sword, and cry to him: "Advance, coward!"

A prey to the swaying of his thoughts he bowed his head.

Suddenly he straightened up. A sort of splendid rectification was wrought in his spirit. There was an expansion of thought fitted to the confinity of the tomb; to be near death makes us see the truth. The vision of the act upon which he felt himself perhaps on the point of enter-



ing appeared to him no longer lamentable, but superb. The war of the street was suddenly transfigured by some indescribable interior throe of the soul before the eye of his mind. All the tumultuous interrogation points of his reverie thronged upon him, but without troubling him. He left none without an answer.

Let us see. Why should his father be indignant? Are there not cases when insurrection rises to the dignity of duty? What would there be, then, belittling to the son of Colonel Pontmercy in the impending combat? It is no longer Montmirail or Champaubert; it is something else. It is no longer a question of a sacred territory, but of a holy idea. The country laments, so be it; but humanity applauds. Besides, is it true that the country mourns? France bleeds, but liberty smiles, and before the smile of liberty France forgets her wound. And then, looking at the matter from a still higher stand, why do men talk of civil war?

Civil war? What does this mean? Is there any foreign war? Is not every war between men war between brothers? War is modified only by its aim. There is neither foreign war nor civil war; there is only unjust war and just war. Until the day when the great human concordat shall be concluded, war—that at least which is the struggle of the hurrying future against the lingering past—may be necessary. What reproach can be brought against such war? War becomes shame, the sword becomes a dagger only when it assassinates right, progress, reason, civilization, truth. Then, civil war or foreign war, it is iniquitous; its name is crime. Outside of that holy thing, justice, by what right does one form of war despise another? By what right does the sword of Washington disown the pike of Camille Desmoulins? Leonidas against the foreigner, Timoleon against the tyrant, which is the greater? One is the defender, the other is the liberator. Shall we brand, without troubling ourselves with the object, every resort to arms in the interior of a city? Then mark with infamy Brutus, Marcel, Arnold of Blankenheim, Coligny. War of the thickets? war of the streets? Why not? It was the war of Ambiorix, of Artaveld, of Maruix, of Pelagius. But Ambiorix fought against Rome, Artaveld against France. Maruix against Spain, Pelagius

against the Moors; all against the foreigner. Well, monarchy is the foreigner, oppression is the foreigner, divine right is the foreigner. Despotism violates the moral frontier as invasion violates the geographical frontier. To drive out the tyrant or to drive out the English is, in either case, to retake your territory. There comes an hour when protest no longer suffices; after philosophy there must be action; the strong hand finishes what the idea has planned; *Prômetheus Bound* begins, *Aristogeiton* completes; the *Encyclopédie* enlightens souls, the 10th of August electrifies them. After Æschylus, Thrasybulus; after Diderot, Danton. The multitudes have a tendency to accept a master. Their mass deposits apathy. A mob easily totalizes itself into obedience. Men must be aroused, pushed, shocked by the very benefits of their deliverance, their eyes wounded with the truth, light thrown them in terrible handfuls. They should be blinded a little for their own safety; this dazzling wakens them. Hence the necessity for tocsins and for wars. Great warriors must arise, illuminate the nations by boldness, and shake free this sad humanity which is covered with shadow by divine right. Cæsarean glory, force, fanaticism, irresponsible power and absolute dominion, a mob stupidly occupied with gazing, in their twilight splendor, at these gloomy triumphs of the night. Down with the tyrant! But what? of whom do you speak? do you call Louis Philippe the tyrant? No; no more than Louis XVI. They are both what history is accustomed to call good kings; but principles can not be parceled out; the logic of the true is rectilinear; the peculiarity of truth is to be without complaisance; no compromise, then; all encroachment upon man must be repressed; there is divine right in Louis XVI, there is *parce que Bourbon* in Louis Philippe; both represent in a certain degree the confiscation of the right; and to wipe out the universal usurpation it is necessary to fight them; it is necessary, France always taking the initiative. When the master falls in France he falls everywhere. In short, to re-establish social truth, to give back to liberty her throne, to give back the people to the people, to give back sovereignty to man, to replace the purple upon the head of France, to restore in their fulness reason and equity, to suppress every germ of antagonism by restoring every man to himself, to abolish the

obstacle which royalty opposes to the immense universal concord, to replace the human race on the level with right, what cause more just, and, consequently, what war more grand? These wars construct peace. An enormous fortress of prejudices, of privileges, of superstitions, of lies, of exactions, of abuses, of violence, of iniquity, of darkness, is still standing upon the world with its towers of hatred. It must be thrown down. This monstrous pile must be made to fall. To conquer at Austerlitz is grand; to take the Bastille is immense.

There is nobody who has not remarked it in himself, the soul, and this is the marvel of its complicate unity and ubiquity, has the wonderful faculty of reasoning almost coolly in the most desperate extremities; and it often happens that disconsolate passion and deep despair, in the very agony of their darkest soliloquies, weigh subjects and discuss theses. Logic is mingled with convulsion, and the thread of a syllogism floats unbroken in the dreary storm of thought. This was Marius' state of mind.

Even while thinking thus, overwhelmed but resolute, hesitating, however, and, indeed, shuddering in view of what he was about to do, his gaze wandered into the interior of the barricade. The insurgents were chatting in undertone, without moving about; and that quasi-silence was felt which marks the last phase of delay. Above them, at a third-story window, Marius distinguished a sort of spectator or witness who seemed to him singularly attentive. It was the porter killed by Le Cabuc. From below, by the reflection of the torch hidden among the paving-stones, this head was dimly perceptible. Nothing was more strange in that gloomy and uncertain light than that livid, motionless, astonished face with its bristling hair, its staring eyes, and its gaping mouth, leaning over the street in an attitude of curiosity. One would have said that he who was dead was gazing at those who were about to die. A long trail of blood which had flowed from this head descended in ruddy streaks from the window to the height of the first story, where it stopped.



## BOOK FOURTEENTH—THE GRANDEURS OF DESPAIR

### I

#### THE FLAG: FIRST ACT

**N**OTHING came yet. The clock of St. Merry had struck ten. Enjolras and Combeferre had sat down, carbine in hand, near the opening of the great barricade. They were not talking, they were listening; seeking to catch even the faintest and most distant sound of a march.

Suddenly, in the midst of this dismal calm, a clear, young, cheerful voice, which seemed to come from the Rue Saint Denis, arose and began to sing distinctly to the old popular air, "*Au clair de la lune*," these lines which ended in a sort of cry similar to the cry of a cock:

"Mon nez est en larmes,  
Mon ami Bugeaud,  
Prêt-moi tes gendarmes  
Pour leur dire un mot.  
En capote bleue,  
La poule au shako,  
Voici la banlieue!  
Co-cocorico." \*

They grasped each other by the hand:

"It is Gavroche," said Enjolras.

"He is warning us," said Combeferre.

A headlong run startled the empty street; they saw a creature nimbler than a clown climb over the omnibus, and Gavroche bounded into the barricade all breathless, saying:

"My musket! Here they are."

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\* "My nose is in tears,  
My good friend Bugeaud,  
Just lend me your spears  
To tell them my woe.  
In blue cassimere,  
And feathered shako,  
The banlieue is here!  
Co-cocorico!"

An electric thrill ran through the whole barricade, and a moving of hands was heard, feeling for their muskets.

"Do you want my carbine?" said Enjolras to the *gamin*.

"I want the big musket," answered Gavroche.

And he took Javert's musket.

Two sentinels had been driven back, and had come in almost the same time as Gavroche. They were the sentinel from the end of the street and the vidette from La Petite Truanderie. The vidette in the little Rue des Prêcheurs remained at his post, which indicated that nothing was coming from the direction of the bridges and the markets.

The Rue de la Chanvrerie, in which a few paving-stones were dimly visible by the reflection of the light which was thrown upon the flag, offered to the insurgents the appearance of a great black porch opening into a cloud of smoke.

Every man had taken his post for the combat.

Forty-three insurgents, among them Enjolras, Combeferre, Courfeyrac, Bossuet, Joly, Bahorel, and Gavroche, were on their knees in the great barricade, their heads even with the crest of the wall, the barrels of their muskets and their carbines pointed over the paving-stones as though loop-holes, watchful, silent, ready to fire. Six, commanded by Feuilly, were stationed, with their muskets at their shoulders, in the windows of the two upper stories of Corinth.

A few moments more elapsed, then a sound of steps, measured, heavy, numerous, was distinctly heard from the direction of St. Leu. This sound, at first faint, then distinct, then heavy and sonorous, approached slowly, without halt, without interruption, with a tranquil and terrible continuity. Nothing but this could be heard. It was at once the silence and the sound of the statue of the commander, but this stony tread was so indescribably enormous and so multiplex that it called up at the same time the idea of a throng and of a spectre. You would have thought you heard the strides of the fearful statue Legion. This tread approached; it approached still nearer and stopped. They seemed to hear at the end of the street the breathing of many men. They saw nothing, however, only they discovered at the very end, in that dense obscurity, a multitude of metallic threads as fine as needles and almost

imperceptible, which moved about like those indescribable phosphoric networks which we perceive under our closed eyelids at the moment of going to sleep in the first mists of slumber. They were bayonets and musket-barrels dimly lighted up by the distant reflection of the torch.

There was still a pause, as if on both sides they were awaiting. Suddenly, from the depth of that shadow, a voice, so much the more ominous because nobody could be seen, and because it seemed as if it were the obscurity itself which was speaking, cried: "Who is there?"

At the same time they heard the click of the leveled muskets.

Enjolras answered in a lofty and ringing tone:

"French revolution!"

"Fire!" said the voice.

A flash empurpled all the façades on the street, as if the door of a furnace were opened and suddenly closed.

A fearful explosion burst over the barricade. The red flag fell. The volley had been so heavy and so dense that it had cut the staff, that is to say, the very point of the pole of the omnibus. Some balls, which ricocheted from the cornices of the houses, entered the barricade and wounded several men.

The impression produced by this first charge was freezing. The attack was impetuous, and such as to make the boldest ponder. It was evident that they had to do with a whole regiment at least.

"Comrades," cried Courfeyrac, "don't waste the powder. Let us wait to reply till they come into the street."

"And, first of all," said Enjolras, "let us hoist the flag again!"

He picked up the flag which had fallen just at his feet.

They heard from without the rattling of the ramrods in the muskets; the troops were reloading.

Enjolras continued:

"Who is there here who has courage? who replants the flag on the barricade?"

Nobody answered. To mount the barricade at the moment when without doubt it was aimed at anew, was simply death. The bravest hesitates to sentence himself; Enjolras himself felt a shudder. He repeated:

"Nobody volunteers!"



## II

## THE FLAG: SECOND ACT

SINCE they had arrived at Corinth and had commenced building the barricade, hardly any attention had been paid to Father Mabeuf. M. Mabeuf, however, had not left the company. He had entered the ground floor of the wine-shop and sat down behind the counter. There he had been, so to speak, annihilated in himself. He no longer seemed to look or to think. Courfeyrac and others had accosted him two or three times, warning him of the danger, entreating him to withdraw, but he had not appeared to hear them. When nobody was speaking to him his lips moved as if he were answering somebody, and as soon as anybody addressed a word to him his lips became still and his eyes lost all appearance of life. Some hours before the barricade was attacked he had taken a position which he had not left since, his hands upon his knees and his head bent forward as if he were looking into an abyss. Nothing had been able to draw him out of this attitude; it appeared as if his mind were not in the barricade. When everybody had gone to take his place for the combat there remained in the basement-room only Javert, tied to the post, an insurgent with drawn sabre watching Javert, and he, Mabeuf. At the moment of the attack, at the discharge, the physical shock reached him, and, as it were, awakened him; he rose suddenly, crossed the room, and at the instant when Enjolras repeated his appeal: "Nobody volunteers!" they saw the old man appear in the doorway of the wine-shop.

His presence produced some commotion in the group. A cry arose:

"It is the Voter! it is the Conventionist! it is the Representative of the people!"

It is probable that he did not hear.

He walked straight to Enjolras, the insurgents fell back before him with a religious awe, he snatched the flag from Enjolras, who drew back petrified; and then, nobody daring to stop him or to aid him, this old man of eighty, with shaking head but firm foot, began to climb slowly up the

stairway of paving-stones built into the barricade. It was so gloomy and so grand that all about him cried: "Hats off!" At each step it was frightful; his white hair, his decrepit face, his large forehead bald and wrinkled, his hollow eyes, his quivering and open mouth, his old arm raising the red banner, surged up out of the shadow and grew grand in the bloody light of the torch, and they seemed to see the ghost of '93 rising out of the earth, the flag of terror in its hand.

When he was on the top of the last step, when this trembling and terrible phantom, standing upon that mound of rubbish before 1,200 visible muskets, rose up, in the face of death and as if he were stronger than it, the whole barricade had in the darkness a supernatural and colossal appearance.

There was one of those silences which occur only in presence of prodigies.

In the midst of this silence the old man waved the red flag and cried:

*"Vive la révolution! vive la république! fraternity! equality! and death!"*

They heard from the barricade a low and rapid muttering like the murmur of a hurried priest despatching a prayer. It was probably the commissary of police, who was making the legal summons at the other end of the street.

Then the same ringing voice which had cried: "Who is there?" cried:

"Disperse!"

M. Mabeuf, pallid, haggard, his eyes illumined by the mournful fires of insanity, raised the flag above his head and repeated:

*"Vive la république!"*

"Fire!" said the voice.

A second discharge, like a shower of grape, beat against the barricade.

The old man fell upon his knees, then rose up, let the flag drop, and fell backward upon the pavement within, like a log, at full length, with his arms crossed.

Streams of blood ran from beneath him. His old face, pale and sad, seemed to behold the sky.

One of those emotions superior to man, which make us

forget even to defend ourselves, seized the insurgents, and they approached the corpse with a respectful dismay.

"What men these regicides are!" said Enjolras.

Courfeyrac bent over to Enjolras' ear:

"This is only for you, and I don't wish to diminish the enthusiasm. But he was anything but a regicide. I knew him. His name was Father Mabeuf. I don't know what ailed him to-day. But he was a brave blockhead. Just look at his head."

"Blockhead and Brutus heart," answered Enjolras.

Then he raised his voice:

"Citizens! This is the example which the old give to the young. We hesitated, he came! we fell back, he advanced. Behold what those who tremble with old age teach those who tremble with fear! This patriarch is august in the sight of the country. He has had a long life and a magnificent death! Now let us protect his corpse, let every one defend this old man dead as he would defend his father living, and let his presence among us make the barricade impregnable!"

A murmur of gloomy and determined adhesion followed these words.

Enjolras stooped down, raised the old man's head and timidly kissed him on the forehead, then, separating his arms, and handling the dead with a tender care, as if he feared to hurt him, he took off his coat, showed the bleeding holes to all, and said:

"There, now, is our flag."

### III

GAVROCHE WOULD HAVE DONE BETTER TO ACCEPT  
ENJOLRAS' CARBINE

THEY threw a long, black shawl belonging to the widow Hucheloup over Father Mabeuf. Six men made a barrow of their muskets, they laid the corpse upon it, and they bore it, bareheaded, with a solemn slowness, to the large table in the basement-room.

These men, completely absorbed in the grave and sacred thing which they were doing, no longer thought of the perilous situation in which they were.



When the corpse passed near Javert, who was still impassible, Enjolras said to the spy:

"You! directly."

During this time, little Gavroche, who alone had not left his post and had remained on the watch, thought he saw some men approaching the barricade with a stealthy step. Suddenly he cried:

"Take care!"

Courfeyrac, Enjolras, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Joly, Bahorel, Bossuet, all sprang tumultuously from the wine-shop. There was hardly a moment to spare. They perceived a sparkling breadth of bayonets undulating above the barricade. Municipal guards of tall stature were penetrating, some by climbing over the omnibus, others by the opening, pushing before them the *gamin*, who fell back, but did not fly.

The moment was critical. It was that first fearful instant of the inundation, when the stream rises to the level of the bank and when the water begins to infiltrate through the fissures in the dike. A second more and the barricade had been taken.

Bahorel sprang upon the first municipal guard who entered, and killed him at the very muzzle of his carbine; the second killed Bahorel with his bayonet. Another had already prostrated Courfeyrac, who was crying: "Help!" The largest of all, a kind of Colossus, marched upon Gavroche with fixed bayonet. The *gamin* took Javert's enormous musket in his little arms, aimed it resolutely at the giant, and pulled the trigger. Nothing went off. Javert had not loaded his musket. The municipal guard burst into a laugh and raised his bayonet over the child.

Before the bayonet touched Gavroche the musket dropped from the soldier's hands; a ball struck the municipal guard in the middle of the forehead, and he fell on his back. A second ball struck the other guard, who had assailed Courfeyrac, full in the breast, and threw him upon the pavement.

It was Marius, who had just entered the barricade.

## IV

## THE KEG OF POWDER

MARIUS, still hidden in the corner of the Rue Mondétour, had watched the first phase of the combat, irresolute and shuddering. However, he was not able long to resist that mysterious and sovereign infatuation which we may call the appeal of the abyss. Before the imminence of the danger, before the death of M. Mabeuf, that fatal enigma, before Bahorel slain, Courfeyrac crying "Help!" that child threatened, his friends to succor or to avenge, all hesitation had vanished, and he had rushed into the conflict, his two pistols in his hands. By the first shot he had saved Gavroche, and by the second delivered Courfeyrac.

At the shots, at the cries of the wounded guards, the assailants had scaled the intrenchment, upon the summit of which could now be seen thronging municipal guards, soldiers of the line, national guards of the *banlieue*, musket in hand. They already covered more than two-thirds of the wall, but they did not leap into the inclosure; they seemed to hesitate, fearing some snare. They looked into the obscure barricade as one would look into a den of lions. The light of the torch only lighted up their bayonets, their bear-skin caps, and the upper part of their anxious and angry faces.

Marius had now no arms; he had thrown away his discharged pistols, but he had noticed the keg of powder in the basement-room near the door.

As he turned half-round, looking in that direction, a soldier aimed at him. At the moment the soldier aimed at Marius a hand was laid upon the muzzle of the musket and stopped it. It was somebody who had sprung forward, the young workingman with velvet pantaloons. The shot went off, passed through the hand, and, perhaps, also through the workingman, for he fell, but the ball did not reach Marius. All this in the smoke, rather guessed than seen. Marius, who was entering the basement-room, hardly noticed it. Still he had caught a dim glimpse of that musket directed at him, and that hand which had stopped

it, and he had heard the shot. But in moments like that the things which we see waver and rush headlong and we stop for nothing. We feel ourselves vaguely pushed toward still deeper shadows, and all is cloud.

The insurgents, surprised, but not dismayed, had rallied. Enjolras had cried: "Wait! don't fire at random!" In the first confusion, in fact, they might hit one another. Most of them had gone up to the window of the second story and to the dormer windows, whence they commanded the assailants. The most determined, with Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire and Combeferre, had haughtily placed their backs to the houses in the rear, openly facing the ranks of soldiers and guards which crowded the barricade.

All this was accomplished without precipitation, with that strange and threatening gravity which precedes *mêlées*.

On both sides they were taking aim, the muzzles of the guns almost touching; they were so near that they could talk with each other in an ordinary tone. Just as the spark was about to fly an officer in a gorget and with huge epaulets extended his sword and said:

"Take aim!"

"Fire!" said Enjolras.

The two explosions were simultaneous and everything disappeared in the smoke.

A stinging and stifling smoke, amid which writhed, with dull and feeble groans, the wounded and the dying.

When the smoke cleared away, on both sides the combatants were seen, thinned out, but still in the same places, and reloading their pieces in silence.

Suddenly, a thundering voice was heard, crying:

"Be gone, or I'll blow up the barricade!"

All turned in the direction whence the voice came.

Marius had entered the basement-room and had taken the keg of powder; then he had profited by the smoke and the kind of obscure fog which filled the intrenched inclosure to glide along the barricade as far as that cage of paving-stones in which the torch was fixed. To pull out the torch, to put the keg of powder in its place, to push the pile of paving-stones upon the keg, which stove it in, with a sort of terrible self-control—all this had been for



Marius the work of stooping down and rising up; and now all, national guards, municipal guards, officers, soldiers, grouped at the other extremity of the barricade, beheld him with horror, his foot upon the stones, the torch in his hand, his stern face lighted by a deadly resolution, bending the flame of the torch toward that formidable pile in which they discerned the broken barrel of powder, and uttering that terrible cry:

“Be gone, or I’ll blow up the barricade!”

Marius upon this barricade, after the octogenarian, was the vision of the young revolution after the apparition of the old.

“Blow up the barricade!” said a sergeant, “and yourself also!”

Marius answered:

“And myself also.”

And he approached the torch to the keg of powder.

But there was no longer anybody on the wall. The assailants, leaving their dead and wounded, fled pell-mell and in disorder toward the extremity of the street, and were again lost in the night. It was a rout.

The barricade was redeemed.

## V

### END OF JEAN PROUVAIRE’S RHYMES

ALL flocked round Marius. Courfeyrac sprang to his neck.

“You here!”

“How fortunate!” said Combeferre.

“You came in good time!” said Bossuet.

“Without you I should have been dead!” continued Courfeyrac.

“Without you I’d been gobbled!” added Gavroche.

Marius inquired:

“Where is the chief?”

“You are the chief,” said Enjolras.

Marius had all day had a furnace in his brain, now it was a whirlwind. This whirlwind which was within him affected him as if it were without and were sweeping him along. It seemed to him that he was already at an immense distance from life. His two luminous months of

joy and of love, terminating abruptly upon this frightful precipice, Cosette lost to him, this barricade, M. Mabeuf dying for the republic, himself a chief of insurgents, all these things appeared a monstrous nightmare. He was obliged to make a mental effort to assure himself that all this which surrounded him was real. Marius had lived too little as yet to know that nothing is more imminent than the impossible, and that what we must always foresee is the unforeseen. He was a spectator of his own drama, as of a play which one does not comprehend.

In this mist in which his mind was struggling he did not recognize Javert, who, bound to his post, had not moved his head during the attack upon the barricade, and who beheld the revolt going on about him with the resignation of a martyr and the majesty of a judge. Marius did not even perceive him.

Meanwhile the assailants made no movement; they were heard marching and swarming at the end of the street, but they did not venture forward, either that they were awaiting orders, or that before rushing anew upon that impregnable redoubt they were awaiting reinforcements. The insurgents had posted sentinels, and some who were students in medicine had set about dressing the wounded.

They had thrown the tables out of the wine-shop, with the exception of two reserved for lint and cartridges, and that on which lay Father Mabeuf; they added them to the barricade, and had replaced them in the basement-room by the mattresses from the beds of the widow Hucheloup and the servants. Upon these mattresses they had laid the wounded; as for the three poor creatures who lived in Corinth, nobody knew what had become of them. They found them at last, however, hidden in the cellar.

A bitter emotion came to darken their joy over the redeemed barricade.

They called the roll. One of the insurgents was missing. And who? One of the dearest; one of the most valiant: Jean Prouvaire. They sought him among the wounded, he was not there. They sought him among the dead, he was not there. He was, evidently, a prisoner.

Combeferre said to Enjolras:

“They have our friend; we have their officer. Have you set your heart on the death of this spy?”

"Yes," said Enjolras; "but less than on the life of Jean Prouvaire."

This passed in the basement-room near Javert's post.

"Well," replied Combeferre, "I am going to tie my handkerchief to my cane and go with a flag of truce to offer to give them their man for ours."

"Listen," said Enjolras, laying his hand on Combeferre's arm.

There was a significant clicking of arms at the end of the street.

They heard a manly voice cry:

*"Vive la France! Vive l'avenir!"*

They recognized Prouvaire's voice.

There was a flash and an explosion.

Silence reigned again.

"They have killed him," exclaimed Combeferre.

Enjolras looked at Javert and said to him:

"Your friends have just shot you."

## VI

### THE AGONY OF DEATH AFTER THE AGONY OF LIFE

A PECULIARITY of this kind of war is that the attack on the barricades is almost always made in front and that in general the assailants abstain from turning the positions, whether it be that they dread ambushes or that they fear to become entangled in the crooked streets. The whole attention of the insurgents, therefore, was directed to the great barricade, which was evidently the point still threatened and where the struggle must infallibly recommence. Marius, however, thought of the little barricade and went to it. It was deserted and was guarded only by the lamp which flickered between the stones. The little Rue Mondétour, moreover, and the branch streets De la Petite Truanderie and Du Cygne were perfectly quiet.

As Marius, the inspection made, was retiring he heard his name faintly pronounced in the obscurity:

"M. Marius!"

He shuddered, for he recognized the voice which had called him two hours before through the grating in the Rue Plumet.



Only this voice now seemed to be but a breath.

He looked about him and saw nobody.

Marius thought he was deceived and that it was an illusion added by his mind to the extraordinary realities which were thronging about him. He started to leave the retired recess in which the barricade was situated.

"M. Marius!" repeated the voice.

This time he could not doubt; he had heard distinctly; he looked and saw nothing.

"At your feet," said the voice.

He stooped and saw a form in the shadow, which was dragging itself toward him. It was crawling along the pavement. It was this that had spoken to him.

The lamp enabled him to distinguish a blouse, a pair of torn pantaloons of coarse velvet, bare feet, and something which resembled a pool of blood. Marius caught a glimpse of a pale face which rose toward him and said to him:

"You do not know me?"

"No."

"Eponine."

Marius bent down quickly. It was indeed that unhappy child. She was dressed as a man.

"How came you here? what are you doing there?"

"I am dying," said she.

There are words and incidents which rouse beings who are crushed. Marius exclaimed, with a start:

"You are wounded! Wait, I will carry you into the room! They will dress your wounds! Is it serious? how shall I take you up so as not to hurt you? Where are you hurt? Help! my God! But what did you come here for?"

And he tried to pass his arm under her to lift her.

In lifting her he touched her hand.

She uttered a feeble cry.

"Have I hurt you?" asked Marius.

"A little."

"But I have only touched your hand."

She raised her hand into Marius' sight, and Marius saw in the centre of that hand a black hole.

"What is the matter with your hand?" said he.

"It is pierced."

"Pierced?"

"Yes."

"By what?"

"By a ball."

"How?"

"Did you see a musket aimed at you?"

"Yes, and a hand which stopped it."

"That was mine."

Marius shuddered.

"What madness! Poor child! But that is not so bad, if that is all; it is nothing; let me carry you to a bed. They will care for you; people don't die from a shot in the hand."

She murmured:

"The ball passed through my hand, but it went out through my back. It is useless to take me from here. I will tell you how you can care for me better than a surgeon. Sit down by me on that stone."

He obeyed; she laid her head on Marius' knees, and, without looking at him, she said:

"Oh! how good he is! How kind he is! That is it! I don't suffer any more!"

She remained a moment in silence, then she turned her head with an effort and looked at Marius.

"Do you know, M. Marius? It worried me that you should go into that garden; it was silly, since it was I who had shown you the house; and then, indeed, I ought surely to have known that a young man like you—"

She stopped, and, leaping over the gloomy transitions which were doubtless in her mind, she added with a heart-rending smile:

"You thought me ugly, didn't you?"

She continued:

"See, you are lost! Nobody will get out of the barricade now. It was I who led you into this, it was! You are going to die, I am sure. And still, when I saw him aiming at you, I put my hand upon the muzzle of the musket. How droll it is! But it was because I wanted to die before you. When I got this ball I dragged myself here; nobody saw me, nobody picked me up. I waited for you, I said: 'He will not come, then?' Oh! if you knew, I bit my blouse, I suffered so much! Now I am well. Do you remember the day when I came into your room, and when I looked at myself in your mirror, and the day when

I met you on the boulevard near some workwomen? How the birds sang! It was not very long ago. You gave me 100 sous, and I said to you: I don't want your money. Did you pick up your piece? You are not rich. I didn't think to tell you to pick it up. The sun shone bright, I was not cold. Do you remember, M. Marius? Oh! I am happy! We are all going to die."

She had a wandering, grave and touching air. Her torn blouse showed her bare throat. While she was talking she rested her wounded hand upon her breast where there was another hole, from which there came with each pulsation a flow of blood like a jet of wine from an open bung.

Marius gazed upon this unfortunate creature with profound compassion.

"Oh!" she exclaimed suddenly, "it is coming back. I am stifling!"

She seized her blouse and bit it, and her legs writhed upon the pavement.

At this moment the chicken voice of little Gavroche resounded through the barricade. The child had mounted upon a table to load his musket and was gayly singing the song then so popular:

"En voyant Lafayette  
Le gendarme répète:  
Sauvons-nous! sauvons-nous! sauvons-nous!"

Eponine raised herself up and listened, then she murmured: "It is he."

And turning toward Marius:

"My brother is here. He must not see me. He would scold me."

"Your brother?" asked Marius, who thought in the bitterest and most sorrowful depths of his heart of the duties which his father had bequeathed him toward the Thenardiers, "who is your brother?"

"That little boy."

"The one who is singing?"

"Yes."

Marius started.

"Oh! don't go away!" she said, "it will not be long now!"

She was sitting almost upright, but her voice was very



low and broken by hiccoughs. At intervals the death-rattle interrupted her. She approached her face as near as she could to Marius' face. She added, with a strange expression:

"Listen, I don't want to deceive you. I have a letter in my pocket for you. Since yesterday. I was told to put it in the post. I kept it. I didn't want it to reach you. But you would not like it of me, perhaps, when we meet again so soon. We do meet again, don't we? Take your letter."

She grasped Marius' hand convulsively with her wounded hand, but she seemed no longer to feel the pain. She put Marius' hand into the pocket of her blouse. Marius really felt a paper there.

"Take it," said she.

Marius took the letter.

She made a sign of satisfaction and of consent.

"Now, for my pains, promise me—"

And she hesitated.

"What?" asked Marius.

"Promise me!"

"I promise you."

"Promise to kiss me on the forehead when I am dead. I shall feel it."

She let her head fall back upon Marius' knees and her eyelids closed. He thought that poor soul had gone. Eponine lay motionless; but just when Marius supposed her forever asleep she slowly opened her eyes in which the gloomy deepness of death appeared and said to him with an accent the sweetness of which seemed already to come from another world:

"And, then, do you know, M. Marius, I believe I was a little in love with you."

She essayed to smile again and expired.

## VII

GAVROCHE A PROFOUND CALCULATOR OF DISTANCES

MARIUS kept his promise. He kissed that livid forehead from which oozed an icy sweat. This was not an infidelity to Cosette; it was a thoughtful and gentle farewell to an unhappy soul.

He had not taken the letter which Eponine had given him without a thrill. He had felt at once the presence of an event. He was impatient to read it. The heart of man is thus made; the unfortunate child had hardly closed her eyes when Marius thought to unfold this paper. He laid her gently upon the ground and went away. Something told him that he could not read that letter in sight of this corpse.

He went to a candle in the basement-room. It was a little note, folded and sealed with the elegant care of women. The address was in a woman's hand and ran:

"To M. Marius Pontmercy, at M. Courfeyrac's, Rue de la Verrerie, No. 16."

He broke the seal and read:

"My beloved, alas! my father wishes to start immediately. We shall be to-night in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England.

COSETTE.

"June 4."

Such was the innocence of this love that Marius did not even know Cosette's handwriting.

What happened may be told in a few words. Eponine had done it all. After the evening of the 3d of June she had had a double thought, to thwart the projects of her father and the bandits upon the house in the Rue Plumet and to separate Marius from Cosette. She had changed rags with the first young rogue who thought it amusing to dress as a woman, while Eponine disguised herself as a man. It was she who, in the Champ de Mars, had given Jean Valjean the expressive warning: "Remove." Jean Valjean returned home and said to Cosette: "We start to-night, and we are going to the Rue de l'Homme Armé with Toussaint. Next week we shall be in London." Cosette, prostrated by this unexpected blow, had hastily written two lines to Marius. But how should she get the letter to the post? She did not go out alone, and Toussaint, surprised at such an errand, would surely show the letter to M. Fauchelevent. In this anxiety Cosette saw through the grating Eponine in men's clothes, who was now prowling continually about the garden. Cosette called "this young workingman" and handed him five francs and the letter, saying to him: "Carry this letter to its address right away." Eponine put the letter in her pocket. The next

day, June 5, she went to Courfeyrac's to ask for Marius, not to give him the letter, but, a thing which every jealous and loving soul will understand, "to see." There she waited for Marius, or, at least, for Courfeyrac—still to see. When Courfeyrac said to her: "We are going to the barricades," an idea flashed across her mind. To throw herself into that death as she would have thrown herself into any other, and to push Marius into it. She followed Courfeyrac, made sure of the spot where they were building the barricade; and very sure, since Marius had received no notice and she had intercepted the letter, that he would at nightfall be at his usual evening rendezvous, she went to the Rue Plumet, waited there for Marius, and sent him, in the name of his friends, that appeal which must, she thought, lead him to the barricade. She counted upon Marius' despair when he should not find Cosette; she was not mistaken. She returned herself to the Rue de la Chanvrerie. We have seen what she did there. She died with that tragic joy of jealous hearts which drag the being they love into death with them, saying: "Nobody shall have him!"

Marius covered Cosette's letter with kisses. She loved him, then? He had for a moment the idea that now he need not die. Then he said to himself: "She is going away. Her father takes her to England, and my grandfather refuses to consent to the marriage. Nothing is changed in the fatality." Dreamers, like Marius, have these supreme depressions, and paths hence are chosen in despair. The fatigue of life is insupportable; death is sooner over. Then he thought that there were two duties remaining for him to fulfil: to inform Cosette of his death and to send her a last farewell, and to save from the imminent catastrophe which was approaching this poor child, Eponine's brother and Thenardier's son.

He had a pocket-book with him; the same that had contained the pages upon which he had written so many thoughts of love for Cosette. He tore out a leaf and wrote with a pencil these few lines:

Our marriage was impossible. I have asked my grandfather, he has refused; I am without fortune, and you also. I ran to your house, I did not find you; you know the promise that I gave you? I keep it, I die, I love you. When you read this my soul will be near you and will smile upon you.



Having nothing to seal this letter with, he merely folded the paper, and wrote upon it this address:

To Mdlle. Cosette Fauchelevent, at M. Fauchelevent's, Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7.

The letter folded, he remained a moment in thought, took his pocket-book again, opened it, and wrote these lines on the first page with the same pencil:

My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my corpse to my grandfather's, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6, in the Marais.

He put the book into his coat-pocket, then he called Gavroche. The *gamin*, at the sound of Marius' voice, ran up with his joyous and devoted face:

"Will you do something for me?"

"Anything," said Gavroche. "God of the good God! without you I should have been cooked sure."

"You see this letter?"

"Yes."

"Take it. Go out of the barricade immediately [Gavroche, disturbed, began to scratch his ear] and to-morrow morning you will carry it to its address, to Mdlle. Cosette, at M. Fauchelevent's, Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

The heroic boy answered:

"Ah, well, but in that time they'll take the barricade and I shan't be here."

"The barricade will not be attacked again before day-break, according to all appearance, and will not be taken before to-morrow noon."

The new respite which the assailants allowed the barricade was, in fact, prolonged. It was one of those intermissions, frequent in night combats, which are always followed by a redoubled fury.

"Well," said Gavroche, "suppose I go and carry your letter in the morning?"

"It will be too late. The barricade will probably be blockaded; all the streets will be guarded and you can not get out. Go, right away!"

Gavroche had nothing more to say; he stood there, undecided, and sadly scratching his ear. Suddenly, with one of his bird-like motions, he took the letter.

"All right," said he.

And he started off on a run by the little Rue Mondétour.

Gavroche had an idea which decided him, but which he did not tell, for fear Marius would make some objection to it.

That idea was this:

"It is hardly midnight, the Rue de l'Homme Armé is not far; I will carry the letter right away, and I shall get back in time."

## BOOK FIFTEENTH—THE RUE DE L'HOMME ARME

### I

#### BLOTTER, BLABBER

WHAT are the convulsions of a city compared with the émeutes of the soul? Man is a still deeper depth than the people. Jean Valjean, at that very moment, was a prey to a frightful uprising. All the gulfs were reopened within him. He also, like Paris, was shuddering on the threshold of a formidable and obscure revolution. A few hours had sufficed. His destiny and his conscience were suddenly covered with shadow. Of him also, as of Paris, we might say: the two principals are face to face. The angel of light and the angel of darkness are to wrestle on the bridge of the abyss. Which of the two shall hurl down the other? Which shall sweep him away?

On the eve of that same day, June 5, Jean Valjean, accompanied by Cosette and Toussaint, had installed himself in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. A sudden turn of fortune awaited him there.

Cosette had not left the Rue Plumet without an attempt at resistance. For the first time since they had lived together Cosette's will and Jean Valjean's will had shown themselves distinct, and had been, if not conflicting, at least contradictory. There was objection on one side and inflexibility on the other. The abrupt advice: "Remove," thrown to Jean Valjean by an unknown hand, had so far alarmed him as to render him absolute. He believed himself tracked out and pursued. Cosette had to yield.

They both arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé without opening their mouths or saying a word, absorbed in their personal meditations; Jean Valjean so anxious that he did not perceive Cosette's sadness, Cosette so sad that she did not perceive Jean Valjean's anxiety.

Jean Valjean had brought Toussaint, which he had never done in his preceding absences. He saw that possibly he should not return to the Rue Plumet, and he could neither leave Toussaint behind nor tell her his secret. Besides, he felt that she was devoted and safe. Between domestic and master, treason begins with curiosity. But Toussaint, as if she had been predestined to be the servant of Jean Valjean, was not curious. She said, through her stuttering, in her Barneville peasant's speech: "I am from same to same; I thing my act; the remainder is not my labor." ("I am so; I do my work; the rest is not my affair!")

In this departure from the Rue Plumet, which was almost a flight, Jean Valjean carried nothing but the little embalmed valise christened by Cosette the "inseparable." Full trunks would have required porters, and porters are witnesses. They had a coach come to the door on the Rue Babylone and they went away.

It was with great difficulty that Toussaint obtained permission to pack up a little linen and clothing and a few toilet articles. Cosette herself carried only her writing-desk and her blotter.

Jean Valjean, to increase the solitude and mystery of this disappearance, had arranged so as not to leave the cottage on the Rue Plumet till the close of the day, which left Cosette time to write her note to Marius. They arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé after nightfall.

They went silently to bed.

The lodging in the Rue de l'Homme Armé was situated in a rear court, on the second story, and consisted of two bedrooms, a dining-room, and a kitchen adjoining the dining-room, with a loft, where there was a cot-bed which fell to Toussaint. The dining-room was at the same time the ante-chamber, and separated the two bedrooms. The apartments contained all necessary furniture.

We are reassured almost as foolishly as we are alarmed; human nature is so constituted. Hardly was Jean Val-



jean in the Rue de l'Homme Armé before his anxiety grew less, and by degrees was dissipated. There are quieting spots which act in some sort mechanically upon the mind. Obscure street, peaceful inhabitants. Jean Valjean felt some strange contagion of tranquillity in that lane of the ancient Paris, so narrow that it was barred to carriages by a transverse joist laid upon two posts, dumb and deaf in the midst of the noisy city, twilight in broad day, and, so to speak, incapable of emotions between its two rows of lofty, century-old houses, which are silent like the patriarchs that they are. There is stagnant oblivion in this street. Jean Valjean breathed there. By what means could anybody find him there?

His first care was to place the "inseparable" by his side.

He slept well. Night counsels; we may add—night calms. Next morning he woke almost cheerful. He thought the dining-room charming, although it was hideous, furnished with an old round table, a low sideboard surmounted by a hanging mirror, a worm-eaten armchair, and a few other chairs loaded down with Toussaint's bundles. Through an opening in one of these bundles Jean Valjean's national-guard uniform could be seen.

As for Cosette, she had Toussaint bring a bowl of soup to her room, and did not make her appearance till evening.

About five o'clock Toussaint, who was coming and going, very busy with this little removal, set a cold fowl on the dining-room table, which Cosette, out of deference to her father, consented to look at.

This done, Cosette, upon pretext of a severe headache, said good-night to Jean Valjean and shut herself up in her bedroom. Jean Valjean ate a chicken's wing with a good appetite, and, leaning on the table, clearing his brow little by little, was regaining his sense of security.

While he was making this frugal dinner he became confusedly aware, on two or three occasions, of the stammering of Toussaint, who said to him: "Monsieur, there is a row; they are fighting in Paris." But, absorbed in a multitude of interior combinations, he paid no attention to it. To tell the truth, he had not heard.

He arose and began to walk from the window to the door, and from the door to the window, growing calmer and calmer.

With calmness Cosette, his single engrossing care, returned to his thoughts. Not that he was troubled about this headache, a petty derangement of the nerves, a young girl's pouting, the cloud of a moment; in a day or two it would be gone; but he thought of the future, and, as usual, he thought of it pleasantly. After all, he saw no obstacle to their happy life resuming its course. At certain hours everything seems impossible; at other hours everything appears easy; Jean Valjean was in one of those happy hours. They come ordinarily after the evil ones, like day after night, by that law of succession and contrast which lies at the very foundation of nature, and which superficial minds call antithesis. In this peaceful street, in which he had taken refuge, Jean Valjean was relieved from all that had troubled him for some time past. From the very fact that he had seen a good deal of darkness, he began to perceive a little blue sky. To have left the Rue Plumet without complication and without accident was already a piece of good fortune. Perhaps it would be prudent to leave the country, were it only for a few months, and go to London. Well, they would go. To be in France, to be in England, what did that matter, if he had Cosette with him? Cosette was his nation. Cosette sufficed for his happiness; the idea that perhaps he did not suffice for Cosette's happiness, this idea, once his fever and his bane, did not even present itself to his mind. All his past griefs had disappeared, and he was in the full tide of optimism. Cosette, being near him, seemed to belong to him; an optical effect which everybody has experienced. He arranged in his own mind, and with every possible facility, the departure for England with Cosette; and he saw his happiness reconstructed, no matter where, in the perspective of his reverie.

While yet walking up and down with slow steps his eye suddenly met something strange.

He perceived facing him, in the inclined mirror which hung above the sideboard, the lines which follow, and he distinctly read:

"My beloved, alas! my father wishes to start immediately. We shall be to-night in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. In a week we shall be in England.

COSETTE.

"June 4."

Jean Valjean stood aghast.

Cosette, on arriving, had laid her blotter on the sideboard before the mirror, and, wholly absorbed in her sorrowful anguish, had forgotten it there, without even noticing that she left it wide open, and open exactly at the page upon which she had dried the five lines written by her, and which she had given in charge to the young workman passing through the Rue Plumet. The writing was imprinted upon the blotter.

The mirror reflected the writing.

There resulted what is called in geometry the symmetrical image, so that the writing reversed on the blotter was corrected by the mirror and presented its original form; and Jean Valjean had beneath his eyes the letter written in the evening by Cosette to Marius.

It was simple and withering.

Jean Valjean went to the mirror. He read the lines again, but he did not believe it. They produced upon him the effect of an apparition in a flash of lightning. It was a hallucination. It was impossible. It was not.

Little by little his perception became more precise; he looked at Cosette's blotter, and the consciousness of the real fact returned to him. He took the blotter and said: "It comes from that." He feverishly examined the lines imprinted on the blotter, the reversal of the letters made a fantastic scrawl of them, and he saw no sense in them. Then he said to himself: "But that does not mean anything, there is nothing written there." And he drew a long breath, with an inexpressible sense of relief. Who has not felt these silly joys in moments of horror? The soul does not give itself up to despair until it has exhausted all illusions.

He held the blotter in his hand and gazed at it, stupidly happy, almost laughing at the hallucination of which he had been the dupe. All at once his eyes fell upon the mirror, and he saw the vision again. This time it was not a mirage. The second sight of a vision is a reality, it was palpable, it was the writing restored by the mirror. He understood.

Jean Valjean tottered, let the blotter fall, and sank down into the old armchair by the sideboard, his head drooping, his eye glassy, bewildered. He said to himself



that it was clear, and that the light of the world was forever eclipsed, and that Cosette had written that to somebody. Then he heard his soul, again become terrible, give a sullen roar in the darkness. Go, then, and take from the lion the dog which he has in his cage.

A circumstance strange and sad, Marius at that moment had not yet Cosette's letter; chance had brought it, like a traitor, to Jean Valjean before delivering it to Marius.

Jean Valjean till this day had never been vanquished when put to the proof. He had been subjected to fearful trials; no violence of ill-fortune had been spared him; the ferocity of fate, armed with every vengeance and with every scorn of society, had taken him for a subject and had greedily pursued him. He had neither recoiled nor flinched before anything. He had accepted, when he must, every extremity; he had sacrificed his reconquered inviolability of manhood, given up his liberty, risked his head, lost all, suffered all, and he had remained so disinterested and stoical that at times one might have believed him translated like a martyr. His conscience, inured to all possible assaults of adversity, might seem forever impregnable. Well, he who could have seen his inward monitor would have been compelled to admit that at this hour it was growing feeble.

For, of all the tortures which he had undergone in that inquisition of destiny, this was the most fearful. Never had such pincers seized him. He felt the mysterious quiver of every latent sensibility. He felt the laceration of the unknown fibre. Alas, the supreme ordeal, let us say, rather, the only ordeal, is the loss of the beloved being.

Poor old Jean Valjean did not, certainly, love Cosette otherwise than as a father; but, as we have already mentioned, into this paternity the very bereavement of his life had introduced every love; he loved Cosette as his daughter, he loved her as his mother, and he loved her as his sister; and, as he had never had either sweetheart or wife, as nature is a creditor who accepts no protest, that sentiment, also, the most indestructible of all, was mingled with the others, vague, ignorant, pure with the purity of blindness, unconscious, celestial, angelic, divine; less like a sentiment than like an instinct; less like an instinct than like

an attraction, imperceptible and invisible, but real; and love, properly speaking, existed in his enormous tenderness for Cosette as does the vein of gold in the mountain, dark and virgin.

Remember that condition of heart which we have already pointed out. No marriage was possible between them, not even that of souls; and still it was certain that their destinies were espoused. Except Cosette, that is to say, except a childhood, Jean Valjean, in all his long life, had known nothing of those objects which man can love. The passions and the loves which succeed one another had not left on him those successive greens, a light green over a dark green, which we notice upon leaves that pass the winter, and upon men who pass their fifty years. In short—and we have more than once insisted upon it—all that interior fusion, all that whole, the resultant of which was a lofty virtue, ended in making of Jean Valjean a father for Cosette. A strange father forged out of the grandfather, the son, the brother, and the husband, which there was in Jean Valjean; a father in whom there was even a mother; a father, who loved Cosette and adored her, and to whom that child was light, was home, was family, was country, was paradise.

So, when he saw that it was positively ended, that she escaped him, that she glided from his hands, that she had eluded him, that it was cloud, that it was water, when he had before his eyes this crushing evidence; another is the aim of her heart, another is the desire of her life, there is a beloved; “I am only the father; I no longer exist”; when he could no more doubt, when he said to himself: “She is going away out of me!” the grief which he felt surpassed the possible. To have done all that he had done to come to this! and what! to be nothing! Then, as we have just said, he felt from head to foot a shudder of revolt. He felt even to the roots of his hair the immense awakening of selfishness, and the “me” howled in the abyss of this soul.

There are interior subsoilings. The penetration of a torturing certainty into man does not occur without breaking up and pulverizing certain deep elements which are sometimes the man himself. Grief, when it reaches this stage, is a panic of all the forces of the soul. These are

fatal crises. Few among us come through them without change and firm in duty. When the limit of suffering is overpassed the most imperturbable virtue is disconcerted. Jean Valjean took up the blotter and convinced himself anew; he bent as if petrified over the undeniable lines, with eye fixed; and such a cloud formed within him that one might have believed the whole interior of that soul was crumbling.

He examined this revelation through the magnifying powers of reverie with an apparent and frightful calmness, for it is a terrible thing when the calmness of man reaches the rigidity of the statue.

He measured the appalling step which his destiny had taken without a suspicion on his part; he recalled his fears of the previous summer so foolishly dissipated; he recognized the precipice; it was still the same; only Jean Valjean was no longer on the brink, he was at the bottom.

A bitter and monstrous thing, he had fallen without perceiving it. All the light of his life had gone out, he believing that he constantly saw the sun.

His instinct did not hesitate. He put together certain circumstances, certain dates, certain blushes, and certain pallors of Cosette, and he said to himself: "It is he." The divination of despair is a sort of mysterious bow which never misses its aim. With his first conjecture he hit Marius. He did not know the name, but he found the man at once. He perceived distinctly at the bottom of the implacable evocation of memory the unknown prowler of the Luxembourg, that wretched seeker of amours, that romantic idler, that imbecile, that coward, for it is cowardice to come and make sweet eyes at girls who are beside their father who loves them.

After he had fully determined that the young man was at the bottom of this state of affairs, and that it all came from him, he, Jean Valjean, the regenerated man, the man who had labored so much upon his soul, the man who had made so many efforts to resolve all life, all misery, and all misfortune into love, he looked within himself and there he saw a spectre—hatred.

Great griefs contain dejection. They discourage existence. The man into whom they enter feels something go out of him. In youth their visit is dismal; in later years



it is ominous. Alas! when the blood is hot, when the hair is black, when the head is erect upon the body like the flame upon the torch, when the sheaf of destiny is still full, when the heart, filled with a fortunate love, still has pulsations which can be responded to, when we have before us the time to retrieve, when all women are before us, and all smiles and all the future and all the horizon, when the strength of life is complete, if despair is a fearful thing, what is it, then, in old age, when the years rush along, growing bleaker and bleaker, at the twilight hour, when we begin to see the stars of the tomb!

While he was thinking, Toussaint entered. Jean Valjean arose, and asked her:

"In what direction is it? Do you know?"

Toussaint, astonished, could only answer:

"If you please?"

Jean Valjean resumed:

"Didn't you tell me just now that they were fighting?"

"Oh! yes, monsieur," answered Toussaint. "It is over by St. Merry."

There are some mechanical impulses which come to us, without our knowledge even, from our deepest thoughts. It was doubtless under the influence of an impulse of this kind, and of which he was hardly conscious, that Jean Valjean five minutes afterward found himself in the street.

He was bareheaded, seated upon the stone block by the door of his house. He seemed to be listening.

The night had come.

## II

### THE GAMIN AN ENEMY OF LIGHT

**H**OW much time did he pass thus? What were the ebbs and the flows of that tragic meditation? Did he straighten up? Did he remain bowed? Had he been bent so far as to break? Could he yet straighten himself and regain a foothold in his conscience upon something solid? He himself probably could not have told.

The street was empty. A few anxious bourgeois, who were rapidly returning home, hardly perceived him. Every man for himself in times of peril. The lamp-

lighter came as usual to light the lamp which hung exactly opposite the door of No. 7 and went away. Jean Valjean, to one who had examined him in that shadow, would not have seemed a living man. There he was, seated upon the block by his door, immovable as a goblin of ice. There is congelation in despair. The tocsin was heard, and vague, stormy sounds were heard. In the midst of all this convulsive clamor of the bell, mingled with the émeute, the clock of St. Paul's struck eleven, gravely and without haste, for the tocsin is man; the hour is God. The passing of the hour had no effect upon Jean Valjean; Jean Valjean did not stir. However, almost at that very moment, there was a sharp explosion in the direction of the markets; a second followed, more violent still; it was probably that attack on the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrière which we have just seen repulsed by Marius. At this double discharge, the fury of which seemed increased by the stupor of the night, Jean Valjean was startled; he looked up in the direction whence the sound came; then he sank down upon the block, folded his arms, and his head dropped slowly upon his breast.

He resumed his dark dialogue with himself.

Suddenly he raised his eyes; somebody was walking in the street; he heard steps near him, he looked, and, by the light of the lamp, in the direction of the Archives, he perceived a livid face, young and radiant.

Gavroche had just arrived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

Gavroche was looking in the air and appeared to be searching for something. He saw Jean Valjean perfectly, but he took no notice of him.

Gavroche, after looking into the air, looked on the ground; he raised himself on tiptoe and felt of the doors and windows of the ground floors; they were all closed, bolted, and chained. After having found five or six houses barricaded in this way, the *gamin* shrugged his shoulders and took counsel with himself, thus: "Golly!"

Then he began to look into the air again.

Jean Valjean, who, the instant before, in the state of mind in which he was, would not have spoken nor even replied to anybody, felt irresistibly impelled to address a word to this child.

"Small boy," said he, "what is the matter with you?"

"The matter is that I am hungry," answered Gavroche tartly. And he added: "Small yourself."

Jean Valjean felt in his pocket and took out a five-franc piece.

But Gavroche, who was one of the wagtail species, and who passed quickly from one action to another, had picked up a stone. He had noticed a lamp.

"Hold on," said he, "you have your lamps here still. You are not regular, my friend. It is disorderly. Break me that."

And he threw the stone into the lamp, the glass from which fell with such a clatter that some bourgeois, hid behind their curtains in the opposite house, cried: "There is ninety-three!"

The lamp swung violently and went out. The street became suddenly dark.

"That's it, old street," said Gavroche, "put on your nightcap."

And, turning toward Jean Valjean:

"What do you call that gigantic monument that you have got there at the end of the street? That's the Archives, isn't it? They ought to chip off these big fools of columns slightly and make a genteel barricade of them."

Jean Valjean approached Gavroche.

"Poor creature," said he, in an undertone, and speaking to himself, "he is hungry."

And he put the one hundred-sou piece into his hand.

Gavroche cocked up his nose, astonished at the size of this big sou; he looked at it in the dark, and the whiteness of the big sou dazzled him. He knew five-franc pieces by hearsay; their reputation was agreeable to him; he was delighted to see one so near. He said: "Let us contemplate the tiger."

He gazed at it for a few moments in ecstasy; then turning toward Jean Valjean, he handed him the piece, and said majestically:

"Bourgeois, I prefer to break lamps. Take back your wild beast. You don't corrupt me. It has five claws; but it don't scratch me."

"Have you a mother?" inquired Jean Valjean.

Gavroche answered:



"Perhaps more than you have."

"Well," replied Jean Valjean, "keep this money for your mother."

Gavroche felt softened. Besides, he had just noticed that the man who was talking to him had no hat, and that inspired him with confidence.

"Really," said he, "it isn't to prevent my breaking the lamps?"

"Break all you like."

"You are a fine fellow," said Gavroche.

And he put the five-franc piece into one of his pockets.

His confidence increasing, he added:

"Do you belong in the street?"

"Yes; why?"

"Could you show me No. 7?"

"What do you want with No. 7?"

Here the boy stopped; he feared that he had said too much; he plunged his nails vigorously into his hair, and merely answered:

"Ah! that's it."

An idea flashed across Jean Valjean's mind. Anguish has such lucidities. He said to the child:

"Have you brought the letter I am waiting for?"

"You?" said Gavroche. "You are not a woman."

"The letter is for Mdlle. Cosette, isn't it?"

"Cosette?" muttered Gavroche. "Yes, I believe it is that funny name."

"Well," resumed Jean Valjean, "I am to deliver the letter to her. Give it to me."

"In that case you must know that I am sent from the barricade?"

"Of course," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche thrust his hand into another of his pockets and drew out a folded paper.

Then he gave a military salute.

"Respect for the despatch," said he. "It comes from the provisional government."

"Give it to me," said Jean Valjean.

Gavroche held the paper raised above his head.

"Don't imagine that this is a love-letter. It is for a woman, but it is for the people. We men, we are fighting, and we respect the sex. We don't do as they do in

high life, where there are lions who send love-letters to camels."

"Give it to me."

"The fact is," continued Gavroche, "you look to me like a fine fellow."

"Give it to me, quick."

"Take it."

And he handed the paper to Jean Valjean.

"And hurry yourself, M. What's-your-name, for Mamselle What's-her-name is waiting."

Gavroche was proud of having produced this word.

Jean Valjean asked:

"Is it to St. Merry that the answer is to be sent?"

"In that case," exclaimed Gavroche, "you would make one of those cakes vulgarly called blunders. That letter comes from the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, and I am going back there. Good-night, citizen."

This said Gavroche went away, or rather resumed his flight like an escaped bird toward the spot whence he came. He replunged into the obscurity, as if he made a hole in it, with the rapidity and precision of a projectile; the little Rue de l'Homme Armé again became silent and solitary; in a twinkling this strange child, who had within him shadow and dream, was buried in the dusk of those rows of black houses, and was lost therein like smoke in the darkness; and one might have thought him dissipated and vanished, if, a few minutes after his disappearance, a loud crashing of glass and the splendid patatras of a lamp falling upon the pavement had not abruptly awakened the indignant bourgeois. It was Gavroche passing along the Rue du Chaume.

### III

#### WHILE COSETTE AND TOUSSAINT SLEEP

**J**EAN VALJEAN went in with Marius' letter.

He groped his way upstairs, pleased with the darkness, like an owl which holds his prey, opened and softly closed the door, listened to see if he heard any sound, decided that, according to all appearances, Cosette and Toussaint were asleep, plunged three or four matches into the bottle of the Fumade tinder-box before he could

raise a spark, his hand trembled so much; there was theft in what he was about to do. At last, his candle was lighted; he leaned his elbows on the table, unfolded the paper and read.

In violent emotions we do not read, we prostrate the paper which we hold, so to speak, we strangle it like a victim, we crush the paper, we bury the nails of our wrath or of our delight in it; we run to the end, we leap to the beginning; the attention has a fever; it comprehends by wholesale, almost, the essential; it seizes a point and all the rest disappears. In Marius' note to Cosette Jean Valjean saw only these words:

"—— I die. When you read this my soul will be near you."

Before these two lines he was horribly dazzled; he sat a moment as if crushed by the change of emotion which was wrought within him; he looked at Marius' note with a sort of drunken astonishment; he had before his eyes that splendor, the death of the hated being.

He uttered a hideous cry of inward joy. So, it was finished. The end came sooner than he had dared to hope. The being who encumbered his destiny was disappearing. He was going away of himself, freely, of his own accord. Without any intervention on his, Jean Valjean's, part, without any fault of his, "that man" was about to die. Perhaps, even, he was already dead. Here his fever began to calculate. No. He is not dead yet. The letter was evidently written to be read by Cosette in the morning; since those two discharges, which were heard between eleven o'clock and midnight, there has been nothing; the barricade will not be seriously attacked till daybreak; but it is all the same, from the moment "that man" meddles with this war he is lost; he is caught in the net. Jean Valjean felt that he was delivered. He would then find himself once more alone with Cosette. Rivalry ceased, the future recommenced. He had only to keep the note in his pocket. Cosette would never know what had become of "that man." "I have only to let things take their course. That man can not escape. If he is not dead yet, it is certain that he will die. What happiness!"

All this said within himself he became gloomy.

Then he went down and waked the porter.



About an hour afterward Jean Valjean went out in the full dress of a national guard and armed. The porter had easily found in the neighborhood what was necessary to complete his equipment. He had a loaded musket and a cartridge-box full of cartridges. He went in the direction of the markets.

IV

THE EXCESS OF GAVROCHE'S ZEAL

**M**EANWHILE an adventure had just befallen Gavroche.

Gavroche, after having conscientiously stoned the lamp in the Rue du Chaume, came to the Rue des Vieilles Haudriettes, and, not seeing "a cat" there, thought it a good opportunity to strike up all the song of which he was capable. His march, far from being slackened by the singing, was accelerated. He began to scatter along the sleeping or terrified houses these incendiary couplets:

"L'oiseau médit dans les charmilles,  
Et prétende qu'hier Atala  
Avec un russe s'en alla.

"Où vont les belles filles,  
Lon la.

"Mon ami Pierrot, tu babilles,  
Parce que l'autre jour Mila  
Cogna sa vitre, et m'appela. Où vont, etc.

"Les drôlesses sont fort gentilles;  
Leur poison qui m'ensorcela  
Griserait Monsieur Orfila. Où vont, etc.

"J'aime l'amour et ses bisbilles  
J'aime Agnès, j'aime Paméla,  
Lise en m'allumant se brûla. Où vont, etc.

"Jadis, quand je vis les mantilles  
De Suzette et de Zéila,  
Mon âme à leurs plis se mêla. Où vont, etc.

"Amour, quand, dans l'ombre où tu brilles,  
Tu coiffes de roses, Lola,  
Je me damnerais pour cela. Où vont, etc.

“Jeannie, à ton miroir tu t’habilles!  
 Mou cœur un beau jour s’envola;  
 Je crois que c’est Jeanne qui l’a.

Où vont, etc.

“Le soir, en sortant des quadrilles,  
 Je montre aux étoiles Stella  
 Et je leur dis; regardez-la.

Où vont, etc.

Gavroche, while yet singing, was lavish of pantomime. Action is the foundation of the refrain. His face, an inexhaustible repertory of masks, made more convulsive and more fantastic grimaces than the mouths of a torn cloth in a heavy wind. Unfortunately, as he was alone and in the night, it was neither seen nor visible. There are such lost riches.

Suddenly he stopped short. “Let us interrupt the romance,” said he.

His cat-like eye had just distinguished in the recess of a *porte-cochère* what is called in painting a harmony; that is to say, a being and a thing; the thing was a hand-cart, the being was an Auvergnat who was sleeping in it.

The arms of the cart rested on the pavement, and the Auvergnat’s head rested on the tail-board of the cart. His body was curled up on the inclined plane and his feet touched the ground.

Gavroche, with his experience of the things of this world, recognized a drunken man. It was some corner porter who had drunk too much and who was sleeping too much.

“This,” thought Gavroche, “is what summer nights are good for. The Auvergnat is asleep in his cart. We take the cart for the republic and we leave the Auvergnat to the monarchy.

His mind had just received this illumination:

“That cart would go jolly well on our barricade.”

The Auvergnat was snoring.

Gavroche drew the cart softly by the back end and the Auvergnat by the forward end—that is to say, by the feet, and in a minute the Auvergnat, imperturbable, was lying flat on the pavement. The cart was delivered.

Gavroche, accustomed to face the unforeseen on all sides, always had everything about him. He felt in one of his pockets and took out a scrap of paper and an end of a red pencil pilfered from some carpenter.

He wrote:

"French Republic.

"Received your cart."

And he signed: "Gavroche."

This done, he put the paper into the pocket of the still snoring Auvergnat's velvet waistcoat, seized the cross-piece with both hands and started off in the direction of the markets, pushing the cart before him at a full gallop with a glorious triumphal uproar.

This was perilous. There was a post at the *Imprimerie Royale*. Gavroche did not think of it. This post was occupied by the national guards of the *banlieue*. A certain watchfulness began to excite the squad, and their heads were lifted from their camp-beds. Two lamps broken one after another, that song sung at the top of the voice, it was a good deal for streets so cowardly, which long to go to sleep at sunset and put their extinguisher upon their candle so early. For an hour the *gamin* had been making in this peaceful district the uproar of a fly in a bottle. The sergeant of the *banlieue* listened. He waited. He was a prudent man.

The furious rolling of the cart filled the measure of possible delay and determined the sergeant to attempt a reconnoissance.

"There is a whole band here," said he, "we must go softly."

It was clear that the hydra of anarchy had got out of its box and was raging in the quartier.

And the sergeant ventured out of the post with stealthy tread.

All at once, Gavroche, pushing his cart, just as he was going to turn out of the *Rue des Vieilles Haudriettes*, found himself face to face with a uniform, a shako, a plume and a musket.

For a second time he stopped short.

"Hold on," said he, "that's him. Good-morning, public order."

Gavroche's astonishments were short and quickly thawed.

"Where are you going, vagabond?" cried the sergeant.

"Citizen," said Gavroche, "I haven't called you bourgeois yet. What do you insult me for?"

"Where are you going, rascal?"



"Monsieur," resumed Gavroche, "may have been a man of wit yesterday, but you were discharged this morning."

"I want to know where you are going, scoundrel?"

Gavroche answered:

"You talk genteelly. Really, nobody would guess your age. You ought to sell all your hairs at 100 francs apiece. That would make you 500 francs."

"Where are you going? where are you going? where are you going, bandit?"

Gavroche replied:

"Those are naughty words. The first time anybody gives you a suck they should wipe your mouth better."

The sergeant crossed his bayonet.

"Will you tell me where you are going, at last, wretch?"

"My general," said Gavroche, "I am going after the doctor for my wife, who is put to bed."

"To arms!" cried the sergeant.

To save yourself by means of that which has ruined you is the masterpiece of great men; Gavroche measured the entire situation at a glance. It was the cart which had compromised him, it was for the cart to protect him.

At the moment the sergeant was about to rush upon Gavroche the cart became a projectile, and, hurled with all the *gamin's* might, ran against him furiously, and the sergeant, struck full in the stomach, fell backward into the gutter while his musket went off in the air.

At the sergeant's cry the men of the post had rushed out pell-mell; the sound of the musket produced a general discharge at random; after which they reloaded and began again.

This musketry at blind-man's-buff lasted a full quarter of an hour, and killed several squares of glass.

Meanwhile Gavroche, who had run back desperately, stopped five or six streets off, and sat down breathless upon the block at the corner of the Enfants Rouges.

He listened attentively.

After breathing a few moments he turned in the direction in which the firing was raging, raised his left hand to the level of his nose, and threw it forward three times, striking the back of his head with his right hand at the same time, a sovereign gesture into which the Parisian *gamin* has condensed French irony, and which is evi-

dently effective, since it has lasted already for a half-century.

This cheerfulness was marred by a bitter reflection.

"Yes," said he, "I grin, I twist myself, I run over with joy; but I am losing my way, I shall have to make a detour. If I only get to the barricade in time."

Thereupon, he resumed his course.

And, while yet running:

"Ah, yes, where was I?" said he.

He began again to sing his song, as he plunged rapidly through the streets, and this receded into the darkness:

"Mais il reste encor des bastilles,  
Et je vais mettre le holâ  
Dans l'ordre public que voilà.

"Où vont les belles filles,  
Lon la.

"Quelqu'un veut-il jouer aux quilles?  
Tout l'ancien monde s'écroula  
Quand la grosse boule roula.

Où vont, etc.

"Vieux bon peuple, a coups de béquilles,  
Cassons ce Louvre où s'étala  
La monarchie en faibala.

Où vont, etc.

"Nous en avons forcé les grilles,  
Le roi Charles-Dix ce jour-la  
Tenait mal et se décolla.

Où vont, etc."

The taking up of arms at the post was not without result. The cart was conquered, the drunkard was taken prisoner. One was put on the wood-pile, the other was afterward tried before a court-martial as an accomplice. The public ministry of the time availed itself of this circumstance to show its indefatigable zeal for the defence of society.

Gavroche's adventure, preserved among the traditions of the quartier of the Temple, is one of the most terrible reminiscences of the old bourgeois of the Marais and is entitled in their memory: "Nocturnal attack on the post of the Imprimerie Royale."

# JEAN VALJEAN

## BOOK FIRST—WAR BETWEEN FOUR WALLS

### I

#### THE CHARYBDIS OF THE FAUBOURG ST. ANTOINE AND THE SCYLLA OF THE FAUBOURG DU TEMPLE

THE two most memorable barricades which the observer of social diseases might mention do not belong to the period in which the action of this book is placed. These two barricades, symbols both, under two different aspects, of a terrible situation, rose from the earth at the time of the fatal insurrection of June, 1848, the grandest street war which history has seen.

It sometimes happens that, even against principles, even against liberty, equality, and fraternity, even against universal suffrage, even against the government of all by all, from the depths of its anguish, of its discouragements, of its privations, of its fevers, of its distresses, of its miasmas, of its ignorance, of its darkness, that great madman, the rabble, protests and the populace gives battle to the people.

The vagabonds attack the common right; the ochlocracy rises against the demos.

Those are mournful days; for there is always a certain amount of right even in this madness, there is suicide in this duel, and these words, which are intended for insults, vagabonds, rabble, ochlocracy, populace, indicate, alas, rather the fault of those who reign than the fault of those who suffer; rather the fault of the privileged than the fault of the outcasts.

As for us, we never pronounce these words save with sorrow and with respect, for, when philosophy fathoms the facts to which they correspond, it often finds in them many grandeurs among the miseries. Athens was an ochlocracy; the vagabonds made Holland; the populace



more than once saved Rome, and the rabble followed Jesus Christ.

There is no thinker who has not sometimes contemplated the nether magnificences.

It was of this rabble, doubtless, that St. Jerome thought, and of all those poor people and of all those vagabonds and of all those wretches, whence sprang the apostles and the martyrs, when he uttered those mysterious words: "*Fex urbis, lex orbis.*"

The exasperations of this multitude which suffers and which bleeds, its violences in misconstruction of the principles which are its life, its forcible resistance to the law, are popular *coups d'état*, and must be repressed. The honest man devotes himself to it, and for very love for that multitude he battles against it. But how excusable he feels it, even while opposing it! how he venerates it, even while resisting it! It is one of those rare moments when, in doing what we have to do, we feel something which disconcerts and which almost dissuades from going further; we persist, we are compelled to; but the conscience, though satisfied, is sad, and the performance of the duty is marred by an oppression of heart.

June, 1848, was, let us hasten to say, a thing apart, and almost impossible to class in the philosophy of history. All that we have just said must be set aside when we consider that extraordinary émeute in which was felt the sacred anxiety of labor demanding its rights. It must be put down, and that was duty, for it attacked the Republic. But, at the bottom, what was June, 1848? A revolt of the people against itself.

When the subject is not lost sight of there is no digression; let us, then, be permitted for a moment to arrest the reader's attention upon the two absolutely unique barricades of which we have just spoken and which characterized that insurrection.

One obstructed the entrance to the Faubourg St. Antoine; the other defended the approaches of the Faubourg du Temple; those before whom arose, under the bright blue sky of June, these two frightful masterpieces of civil war will never forget them.

The Barricade St. Antoine was monstrous: it was three stories high and seven hundred feet long. It barred from

one corner to the other the vast mouth of the Faubourg, that is to say, three streets; ravined, jagged, notched, abrupt, indented with an immense rent, buttressed with mounds which were themselves bastions, pushing out capes here and there, strongly supported by the two great promontories of houses of the Faubourg, it rose like a cyclopean embankment at the foot of the terrible square which saw the 14th of July. Nineteen barricades stood at intervals along the streets in the rear of this mother barricade. Merely from seeing it, you felt in the Faubourg the immense agonizing suffering which had reached the extreme moment when distress rushes into catastrophe. Of what was this barricade made? "Of the ruins of three six-story houses, torn down for the purpose," said some. "Of the prodigy of all passions," said others. It had the woful aspect of all the works of hatred—ruin. You might say: "Who built that?" You might also say: "Who destroyed that?" It was the improvisation of ebullition. Here! that door! that grating! that shed! that casement! that broken furnace! that cracked pot. Bring all! throw on all! push, roll, dig, dismantle, overturn, tear down all! It was the collaboration of the pavement, the pebble, the timber, the iron bar, the chip, the broken square, the stripped chair, the cabbage stump, the scrap, the rag, and malediction. . . It was great and it was little. It was the bottomless pit parodied upon the spot by chaos come again. The mass with the atom; the side wall thrown down and the broken dish; a menacing fraternization of all rubbish. Sisypheus had cast in his rock and Job his potsherd. Upon the whole, terrible. It was the acropolis of the ragamuffins. Carts overturned roughened the slope; an immense dray was displayed there, crosswise, the axle pointing to the sky, and seemed a scar upon that tumultuous façade; an omnibus, cheerily hoisted by main strength to the very top of the pile, as if the architects of that savagery would add sauciness to terror, presented its unharnessed pole to unknown horses of the air. This gigantic mass, the alluvium of émeute, brought before the mind an Ossa upon Pelion of all the revolutions; '93 upon '89, the 9th Thermidor upon the 10th of August, the 18th Brumaire upon the 21st of January, Vendémiaire upon Prairial, 1848 upon 1830. The place deserved the pains, and that barricade

was worthy to appear on the very spot where the Bastile had disappeared. Were the ocean to make dikes, it would build them thus. The fury of the flood was imprinted upon that misshapen obstruction. What flood? The multitude. You would have thought you saw uproar petrified. You would have thought you heard, upon that barricade, as if there they had been upon their hive, the humming of the enormous black bees of progress by force. Was it a thicket? Was it a Bacchanal? Was it a fortress? Dizziness seemed to have built it by flappings of its wing. There was something of the cloaca in this redoubt, and something of Olympus in this jumble. You saw there, in a chaos full of despair, rafters from roofs, patches from garrets with their wall paper, window sashes with all their glass planted in the rubbish, awaiting artillery, chimneys torn down, wardrobes, tables, benches, a howling topsy-turvy, and those thousand beggarly things, the refuse even of the mendicant, which contain at once fury and nothingness. One would have said that it was the tatters of a people, tatters of wood, of iron, of bronze, of stone, and that the Faubourg St. Antoine had swept them there to its door by one colossal sweep of the broom, making of its misery its barricade. Logs shaped like chopping-blocks, dislocated chains, wooden frames with brackets having the form of gibbets, wheels projecting horizontally from the rubbish, amalgamated with this edifice of anarchy the forbidding form of the old tortures suffered by the people. The Barricade St. Antoine made a weapon of everything; all that civil war can throw at the head of society came from it; it was not battle, it was paroxysm; the carbines which defended that stronghold, among which were some blunderbusses, scattered bits of delf-ware, knuckle-bones, coat buttons, even table-casters, dangerous projectiles on account of the copper. This barricade was furious; it threw up to the clouds an inexpressible clamor; at certain moments, defying the army, it covered itself with multitude and with tempest; a mob of flaming heads crowned it; a swarming filled it; its crest was thorny with muskets, with swords, with clubs, with axes, with pikes, and with bayonets; a huge red flag fluttered in the wind; there were heard cries of command, songs of attack, the roll of the drum, the sobs of women.



and the dark, wild laughter of the starving. It was huge and living; and, as from the back of an electric beast, there came from it a crackling of thunder. The spirit of revolution covered with its cloud that summit whereon growled this voice of the people which is like the voice of God; a strange majesty emanated from that Titanic hodful of refuse. It was a garbage heap, and it was Sinai.

As we have before said, it attacked in the name of the Revolution, what? The Revolution. This barricade, chance, disorder, bewilderment, misunderstanding, the unknown, had opposed to it the Constituent Assembly, the sovereignty of the people, universal suffrage, the nation, the Republic; and it was the Carmagnole defying the Marseillaise.

An insane but heroic defiance, for this old Faubourg is a hero.

The Faubourg and its redoubt lent each other aid. The Faubourg put its shoulder to the redoubt, the redoubt braced itself upon the Faubourg. The huge barricade extended like a cliff upon which broke the strategy of the generals of Africa. Its caverns, its excrescences, its warts, its humps, made grimaces, so to speak, and sneered beneath the smoke. Grape vanished there in the shapeless; shells sank in, were swallowed up, were engulfed; bullets succeeded only in boring holes; of what use to cannonade chaos? And regiments, accustomed to the most savage sights of war, looked with anxious eye upon this kind of wild beast redoubt, by its bristling a wild boar, and by its enormity a mountain.

A mile from there, at the corner of the Rue du Temple, which runs into the boulevard near the Château d'Eau, if you advanced your head boldly beyond the point formed by the front of the Dallemagne warehouse, you perceived in the distance, beyond the canal, in the street which mounts the slopes of Belleville, at the culminating point of the hill, a strange wall reaching the second story of the housefronts, a sort of hyphen between the houses on the right and the houses on the left, as if the street had folded back its highest wall, to shut itself abruptly in. This wall was built of paving-stones. It was straight, correct, cold, perpendicular, leveled with the square, built by the line,

aligned by the plummet. Cement, doubtless, there was none, but, as in certain Roman walls, that did not weaken its rigid architecture. From its height its depth could be guessed. The entablature was mathematically parallel to the base. Here and there could be distinguished, on the gray surface, loopholes almost visible, which resembled black threads. These loopholes were separated from each other by equal intervals. The street was deserted as far as could be seen. Every window and every door closed. In the background rose this obstruction, which made of the street a cul-de-sac; an immovable and quiet wall; nobody could be seen, nothing could be heard; not a cry, not a sound, not a breath. A sepulchre.

The dazzling June sun flooded this terrible thing with light.

This was the barricade of the Faubourg du Temple.

As soon as the ground was reached and it was seen, it was impossible, even for the boldest, not to become thoughtful before this mysterious apparition. It was fitted, dove-tailed, imbricated, rectilinear, symmetrical, and deathly. There was in it science and darkness. You felt that the chief of that barricade was a geometer or a spectre. You beheld it and you spoke low.

From time to time, if anybody, soldier, officer, or representative of the people, ventured to cross the solitary street, a sharp and low whistling was heard and the passer fell wounded or dead, or, if he escaped, a ball was seen to bury itself in some closed shutter, in a space between the stores, in the plastering of a wall. Sometimes a large ball. For the men of the barricade had made of two pieces of cast-iron gas-pipe, stopped at one end with oakum and fire-clay, two small guns. No useless expenditure of powder. Almost every shot told. There were a few corpses here and there and pools of blood upon the pavement. I recollect a white butterfly flying back and forth in the street. Summer does not abdicate.

In the vicinity the pavements of the *porte-cochères* were covered with wounded.

You felt yourself beneath the eye of somebody whom you did not see, and that the whole length of the street was held under aim.

Massed behind the sort of saddle-back which the narrow

bridge over the canal makes at the entrance to the Faubourg du Temple, the soldiers of the attacking column, calm and collected, looked upon this dismal redoubt, this immobility, this impassibility, whence death came forth. Some crept on the ground as far as the top of the curve of the bridge, taking care that their shakos did not show over it.

The valiant Colonel Monteynard admired this barricade with a shudder. "How that is built!" said he to a representative. "Not one stone projects beyond another. It is porcelain." At that moment a ball broke the cross on his breast, and he fell.

"The cowards!" it was said. "But let them show themselves! let us see them! they dare not! they hide!" The barricade of the Faubourg du Temple, defended by eighty men, attacked by 10,000, held out three days. On the fourth day they did as at Zaatcha and at Constantine; they pierced through the houses, they went along the roofs, the barricade was taken. Not one of the eighty cowards thought of flight; all were killed except the chief, Barthélemy, of whom we shall speak presently.

The Barricade St. Antoine was the tumult of thunders; the Barricade du Temple was silence. There was between these two redoubts the difference between the terrible and the ominous. The one seemed a gaping mouth; the other a mask.

Admitting that the gloomy and gigantic insurrection of June was composed of an anger and an enigma, you felt in the first barricade the dragon, and behind the second the sphinx.

These two fortresses were built by two men, one named Cournet, the other Barthélemy. Cournet made the Barricade St. Antoine; Barthélemy the Barricade du Temple. Each was the image of him who built it.

Cournet was a man of tall stature; he had broad shoulders, a red face, a muscular arm, a bold heart, a loyal soul, a sincere and terrible eye. Intrepid, energetic, irascible, stormy, the most cordial of men, the most formidable of warriors. War, conflict, the *mêlée*, were the air he breathed, and put him in good humor. He had been a naval officer, and, from his carriage and his voice, you would have guessed that he sprang from the ocean and that he came



from the tempest; he continued the hurricane in battle. Save in genius, there was in Cournet something of Danton, as, save in divinity, there was in Danton something of Hercules.

Barthélemy, thin, puny, pale, taciturn, was a kind of tragic *gamin* who, struck by a sergent-de-ville, watched for him, waited for him, and killed him, and, at seventeen, was sent to the galleys. He came out and built this barricade.

Later, a terrible thing, at London, both outlaws, Barthélemy killed Cournet. It was a mournful duel. Some time after, caught in the meshes of one of those mysterious fatalities in which passion is mingled, catastrophes in which French justice sees extenuating circumstances, and in which English justice sees only death, Barthélemy was hanged. The gloomy social edifice is so constructed that, thanks to material privation, thanks to moral darkness, this unfortunate being, who contained an intelligence—firm, certainly; great, perhaps—began with the galleys in France and ended with the gallows in England. Barthélemy, on all occasions, hoisted but one flag—the black flag.

## II

### WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE ABYSS BUT TO TALK

SIXTEEN years tell in the subterranean education of the *émeute*, and June, 1848, understood it far better than June, 1832. Thus the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was only a rough draft and an embryo compared with the two colossal barricades which we have just sketched; but, for the period, it was formidable.

The insurgents, under the eye of Enjolras, for Marius no longer looked to anything, turned the night to advantage. The barricade was not only repaired, but made larger. They raised it two feet. Iron bars planted in the paving-stones resembled lances in rest. All sorts of rubbish added, and brought from all sides, increased the exterior intricacy. The redoubt was skilfully made over into a wall within and a thicket without.

They rebuilt the stairway of paving-stones, which permitted ascent, as upon a citadel wall.

They put the barricade in order, cleared up the basement-room, took the kitchen for a hospital, completed the dressing of the wounds, gathered up the powder scattered over the floor and the tables, cast bullets, made cartridges, scraped lint, distributed the arms of the fallen, cleaned the interior of the redoubt, picked up the fragments, carried away the corpses.

They deposited the dead in a heap in the little Rue Mondétour, of which they were still masters. The pavement was red for a long time at that spot. Among the dead were four national guards of the banlieue. Enjolras had their uniforms laid aside.

Enjolras advised two hours of sleep. Advice from Enjolras was an order. Still, three or four only profited by it. Feuilly employed these two hours in engraving this inscription on the wall which fronted the wine-shop:

“VIVENT LES PEUPLES”

These three words, graven in the stone with a nail, were still legible on that wall in 1848.

The three women took advantage of the night's respite to disappear finally, which made the insurgents breathe more freely.

They found refuge in some neighboring house.

Most of the wounded could and would still fight. There were upon a straw mattress and some bunches of straw in the kitchen, now become a hospital, five men severely wounded, two of whom were municipal guards. The wounds of the municipal guards were dressed first.

Nothing now remained in the basement-room but Mabeuf, under his black cloth, and Javert, bound to the post.

“This is the dead-room,” said Enjolras.

In the interior of this room, feebly lighted by a candle, at the very end, the funeral table being behind the post, like a horizontal bar, a sort of large dim cross was produced by Javert standing and Mabeuf lying.

The pole of the omnibus, although maimed by the musketry, was still high enough for them to hang a flag upon it.

Enjolras, who had this quality of a chief, always to do as he said, fastened the pierced and bloody coat of the slain old man to this pole.

No meals could now be had. There was neither bread nor meat. The fifty men of the barricade, in the sixteen hours that they had been there, had very soon exhausted the meagre provisions of the wine-shop. In a given time every barricade which holds out inevitably becomes the raft of *Le Méduse*. They must resign themselves to famine. They were in the early hours of that Spartan day of the 6th of June, when, in the Barricade St. Merry, Jeanne, surrounded by insurgents who were asking for bread, to all those warriors crying: "Something to eat!" answered: "What for? it is three o'clock. At four o'clock we shall be dead!"

As they could eat nothing, Enjolras forbade drinking. He prohibited wine and put them on allowance of brandy.

They found in the cellar some fifteen bottles, full and hermetically sealed. Enjolras and Combeferre examined them. As they came up Combeferre said: "It is some of the old stock of Father Hucheloup, who began as a grocer."

"It ought to be genuine wine," observed Bossuet. "It is lucky that Grantaire is asleep. If he were on his feet we should have hard work to save those bottles." Enjolras, in spite of the murmurs, put his veto upon the fifteen bottles, and in order that no one should touch them, and that they might be, as it were, consecrated, he had them placed under the table on which Father Mabeuf lay.

About two o'clock in the morning they took a count. There were left thirty-seven of them.

Day was beginning to dawn. They had just extinguished the torch, which had been replaced in its socket of paving-stones. The interior of the barricade, that little court taken in on the street, was drowned in darkness, and seemed, through the dim twilight horror, the deck of a disabled ship. The combatants, going back and forth, moved about in it like black forms. Above this frightful nest of shadow the stories of the mute houses were vividly outlined; at the very top the wan chimneys appeared. The sky had that charming undecided hue which is perhaps white and perhaps blue. Some birds were flying with joyful notes. The tall house which formed the rear of the barricade, being toward the east, had a rosy reflection upon its roof. At the window on the third story the morning breeze played with the gray hairs on the dead man's head.



"I am delighted that the torch is extinguished," said Courfeyrac to Feuilly. "That torch, startled in the wind, annoyed me. It appeared to be afraid. The light of a torch resembles the wisdom of a coward; it is not clear, because it trembles."

The dawn awakens minds as well as birds: all were chatting.

Joly, seeing a cat prowling about a water-spout, extracted philosophy therefrom.

"What is the cat?" he exclaimed, "It is a correction. God, having made the mouse, said: 'Hold here, I have made a blunder.' And he made the cat. The cat is the erratum of the mouse. The mouse, plus the cat, is the revised and corrected proof of creation."

Combeferre, surrounded by students and workmen, spoke of the dead, of Jean Prouvaire, of Bahorel, of Mabeuf, and even of Le Cabuc, and of the stern sadness of Enjolras, he said:

"Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Brutus, Chereas, Stephanus, Cromwell, Charlotte Corday, Sand—all, after the blow, had their moment of anguish. Our hearts are so fluctuating, and human life is such a mystery that, even in a civic murder, even in a liberating murder, if there be such, the remorse of having stricken a man surpasses the joy of having served the human race."

And, such is the course of conversation, a moment afterward, by a transition from Jean Prouvaire's rhymes, Combeferre was comparing the translators of the Georgics, Raux with Cournaud, Cournaud with Delille, pointing out the few passages translated by Malfilâtre, particularly the prodigies at the death of Cæsar; and from this word, Cæsar, they came to Brutus.

"Cæsar," said Combeferre, "fell justly. Cicero was severe upon Cæsar, and he was right. This severity is not diatribe. When Zoilus insults Homer, when Mævius insults Virgil, when Visé insults Molière, when Pope insults Shakespeare, when Fréron insults Voltaire, it is an old law of envy and hatred which is at work; genius attracts insult, great men are always barked at more or less. But Zoilus and Cicero are two. Cicero is a judge through the soul, even as Brutus is a judge through the sword. I condemn, for my own part, that final justice, the sword;

but antiquity admitted it. Cæsar, the violator of the Rubicon, conferring as coming from himself, the dignities which came from the people, not rising upon the entrance of the senate, acted, as Eutropius says, the part of a king and almost of a tyrant, *regia ac penè tyrannica*. He was a great man; so much the worse, or so much the better; the lesson is the greater. His twenty-three wounds touch me less than the spittle in the face of Jesus Christ. Cæsar was stabbed by senators; Christ was slapped by lackeys. In the greater outrage we feel the God."

Bossuet, overlooking the talkers from the top of a heap of paving-stones, exclaimed, carbine in hand:

"Oh, Cydathenæum! oh, Myrrhinus! oh, Probalinthe! oh, graces of Æantides. Oh! who will give me to pronounce the verses of Homer like a Greek of Laurium or of Edapteon?"

### III

#### LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

**E**NJOLRAS had gone to make a reconnoissance. He went out by the little Rue Mondétour, creeping along by the houses.

The insurgents, we must say, were full of hope. The manner in which they had repelled the attack during the night had led them almost to contempt in advance for the attack at daybreak. They awaited it and smiled at it. They had no more doubt of their success than of their cause. Moreover, help was evidently about to come. They counted on it. With that facility for triumphant prophecy which is a part of the strength of the fighting Frenchman, they divided into three distinct phases the day which was opening; at six o'clock in the morning a regiment, "which had been labored with," would come over; at noon, insurrection of all Paris; at sundown, revolution.

They heard the tocsin of St. Merry, which had not been silent a moment since the evening; a proof that the other barricade, the great one, that of Jeanne, still held out.

All these hopes were communicated from one to another in a sort of cheerful yet terrible whisper, which resembled the buzz of a hive of bees at war.

Enjolras reappeared. He returned from his gloomy

eagle's walk in the obscurity without. He listened for a moment to all this joy with folded arms, one hand over his mouth. Then, fresh and rosy in the growing whiteness of the morning, he said:

"The whole army of Paris fights. A third of that army is pressing upon the barricade in which you are. Besides the national guard, I distinguished the shakos of the 5th of the line and the colors of the 6th Legion. You will be attacked in an hour. As for the people, they were boiling yesterday, but this morning they do not stir. Nothing to expect, nothing to hope. No more from a Faubourg than from a regiment. You are abandoned."

These words fell upon the buzzing of the groups, and wrought the effect which the first drops of the tempest produced upon the swarm. All were dumb. There was a moment of inexpressible silence, when you might have heard the flight of death.

This moment was short.

A voice, from the most obscure depths of the groups, cried to Enjolras:

"So be it. Let us make the barricade twenty feet high, and let us all stand by it. Citizens, let us offer the protest of corpses. Let us show that, if the people abandon the republicans, the republicans do not abandon the people."

These words relieved the minds of all from the painful cloud of personal anxieties. They were greeted by an enthusiastic acclamation.

The name of the man who thus spoke was never known; it was some obscure blouse-wearer, an unknown, a forgotten man, a passing hero, that great anonymous always found in human crises and in social births, who, at the proper instant, speaks the decisive word supremely, and who vanishes into the darkness after having for a moment represented, in the light of a flash, the people and God.

This inexorable resolution so filled the air of the 6th of June, 1832, that almost at the same hour, in the barricade of St. Merry, the insurgents raised this shout which was proved on the trial, and which has become historical: "Let them come to our aid or let them not come, what matter? Let us die here to the last man."

As we see, the two barricades, although essentially isolated, communicated.



## IV

## FIVE LESS, ONE MORE

AFTER the man of the people, who decreed "the protest of corpses," had spoken and given the formula of the common soul, from all lips arose a strangely satisfied and terrible cry, funereal in meaning and triumphant in tone:

"Long live death! Let us all stay!"

"Why all?" said Enjolras,

"All! all!"

Enjolras resumed:

"The position is good, the barricade is fine. Thirty men are enough. Why sacrifice forty?"

They replied:

"Because nobody wants to go away."

"Citizens," cried Enjolras, and there was in his voice almost an angry tremor, "the republic is not rich enough in men to incur useless expenditures. Vain glory is a squandering. If it is the duty of some to go away, that duty should be performed as well as any other."

Enjolras, the man of principle, had over his co-religionists that sort of omnipotence which emanates from the absolute. Still, notwithstanding this omnipotence, there was a murmur.

Chief to his finger-ends, Enjolras, seeing that they murmured, insisted. He resumed, haughtily:

"Let those who fear to be one of but thirty say so."

The murmurs redoubled.

"Besides," observed a voice from one of the group, "to go away is easily said. The barricade is hemmed in."

"Not toward the markets," said Enjolras. "The Rue Mondétour is open, and by the Rue des Prêcheurs one can reach the Marché des Innocents."

"And there," put in another voice from the group, "he will be taken. He will fall upon some grand guard of the line or the banlieue. They will see a man going by in a cap and blouse. 'Where do you come from, fellow? you belong to the barricade, don't you?' And they look at your hands. You smell of powder. Shot."

Enjolras, without answering, touched Combeferre's shoulder, and they both went into the basement-room.

They came back a moment afterward. Enjolras held out in his hands the four uniforms which he had reserved. Combeferre followed him, bringing the cross-belts and shakos.

"With this uniform," said Enjolras, "you can mingle with the ranks and escape. Here are enough for four."

And he threw the four uniforms upon the unpaved ground.

No wavering in the stoical auditory. Combeferre spoke:

"Come," said he, "we must have a little pity. Do you know what the question is now? It is a question of women. Let us see. Are there any wives, yes or no? Are there any children, yes or no? Are there, yes or no, any mothers who rock the cradle with their foot and who have heaps of little ones about them? Let him among you who has never seen the breast of a nursing-woman hold up his hand. Ah! you wish to die; I wish it also, I, who am speaking to you, but I do not wish to feel the ghosts of women wringing their hands about me. Die, so be it, but do not make others die. Suicides like those which will be accomplished here are sublime; but suicide is strict, and can have no extension; and as soon as it touches those next you the name of suicide is murder. Think of the little flaxen heads and think of the white hairs. Listen: but a moment ago, Enjolras, he just told me of it, saw at the corner of the Rue du Cygne a lighted casement, a candle in a poor window in the fifth story, and on the glass the quivering shadow of the head of an old woman who appeared to have passed the night in watching and to be still waiting. She is, perhaps, the mother of one of you. Well, let that man go away, and let him hasten to say to his mother: 'Mother, here I am!' Let him feel at ease, the work here will be done just as well. When a man supports his relatives by his labor he has no right to sacrifice himself. That is deserting his family. And those who have daughters and those who have sisters! Do you think of it? You get killed, here you are dead; very well; and to-morrow? Young girls who have no bread, that is terrible. Man begs; woman sells. Ah! those charming beings, so graceful and so sweet, who have bonnets of flowers, who fill the house with chastity, who

sing, who prattle, who are like a living perfume, who prove the existence of angels in heaven by the purity of maidens on the earth, that Jeanne, that Lise, that Mimi, those adorable and noble creatures who are your benediction and your pride—oh, God, they will be hungry! What would you have me say to you? There is a market for human flesh; and it is not with your shadowy hands fluttering about them that you can prevent them from entering it! Think of the street, think of the pavement covered with passers, think of the shops before which women walk to and fro with bare shoulders through the mud. Those women also have been pure. Think of your sisters, those who have them. Misery, prostitution, she sergents-de-ville, St. Lazare, such will be the fall of those delicate, beautiful girls, those fragile wonders of modesty, grace and beauty, fresher than the lilacs of the month of May. Ah! you are killed! ah, you are no longer with them! Very well; you desired to deliver the people from monarchy; you give your maidens to the police. Friends, beware, have compassion. Women, hapless women, are not in the habit of reflecting much. We boast that women have not received the education of men; we prevent them from reading, we prevent them from thinking, we prevent them from interesting themselves in politics; will you prevent them from going to-night to the morgue and identifying your corpses? Come, those who have families must be good fellows and give us a grasp of the hand and go away and leave us to the business here all alone. I know well that it requires courage to go, it is difficult; but the more difficult it is the more praiseworthy. You say: 'I have a musket; I am at the barricade; come the worst, I stay.' Come the worst, that is very soon said. My friends, there is a morrow; you will not be here on that morrow, but your families will. And what suffering! See, a pretty healthy child that has cheeks like an apple, that babbles, that prattles, that jabbles, that laughs, that smells sweet under the kiss, do you know what becomes of him when he is abandoned? I saw one, very small, no taller than that. His father was dead. Some poor people had taken him in from charity, but they had no bread for themselves. The child was always hungry. It was winter. He did not cry. They saw him go up to the stove where there was never any fire, and the



pipe of which, you know, was plastered with yellow clay. The child picked off some of that clay with his little fingers and ate it. His breathing was hard, his face livid, his legs soft, his belly big. He said nothing. They spoke to him, he did not answer. He died. He was brought to the Necker hospital to die, where I saw him. I was surgeon at that hospital. Now, if there are any fathers among you, fathers whose delight it is to take a walk on Sunday holding in their great strong hand the little hand of their child, let each of those fathers imagine that that child is his own. That poor bird, I remember him well. It seems to me that I see him now, when he lay naked upon the dissecting table, his ribs projecting under his skin like graves under the grass of a churchyard. We found a kind of mud in his stomach. There were ashes in his teeth. Come, let us search with our conscience and take counsel with our heart. Statistics show that the mortality of abandoned children is fifty-five per cent. I repeat it, it is a question of wives, it is a question of mothers, it is a question of young girls, it is a question of babes. Do I speak to you for yourselves? We know very well what you are; we know very well that you are all brave; good heavens! we know very well that your souls are filled with joy and glory at giving your life for the great cause; we know very well that you feel that you are elected to die usefully and magnificently, and that each of you clings to his share of the triumph. Well and good. But you are not alone in this world. There are other beings of whom we must think. We must not be selfish."

All bowed their heads with a gloomy air.

Strange contradictions of the human heart in its most sublime moments! Combeferre, who spoke thus, was not an orphan. He remembered the mothers of others, and he forgot his own. He was going to be killed. He was "selfish."

Marius, fasting, feverish, successively driven from every hope, stranded upon grief, most dismal of shipwrecks, saturated with violent emotions and feeling the end approach, was sinking deeper and deeper into that visionary stupor which always precedes the fatal hour when voluntarily accepted.

A physiologist might have studied in him the growing

symptoms of that febrile absorption known and classified by science, and which is to suffering what ecstasy is to pleasure. Despair also has its ecstasy. Marius had reached that point. He witnessed it all as from without; as we have said, the things which were occurring before him seemed afar off; he perceived the whole, but did not distinguish the details. He saw the comers and goers through a bewildering glare. He heard the voice speak as from the depth of an abyss.

Still this moved him. There was one point in this scene which pierced through to him and which woke him. He had now but one idea, to die, and he would not be diverted from it; but he thought, in his funereal somnambulism, that while destroying one's self it is not forbidden to save another.

He raised his voice:

"Enjolras and Combeferre are right," said he; "no useless sacrifice. I add my voice to theirs, and we must hasten. Combeferre has given the criteria. There are among you some who have families, mothers, sisters, wives, children. Let those leave the ranks."

Nobody stirred.

"Married men and supports of families, out of the ranks!" repeated Marius.

His authority was great. Enjolras was indeed the chief of the barricade, but Marius was its savior.

"I order it," cried Enjolras.

"I beseech you," said Marius.

Then, roused by the words of Combeferre, shaken by the order of Enjolras, moved by the prayer of Marius, those heroic men began to inform against each other. "That is true," said a young man to a middle-aged man. "You are the father of a family. Go away." "It is you, rather," answered the man; "you have two sisters whom you support." And an unparalleled conflict broke out. It was as to which should not allow himself to be laid at the door of the tomb.

"Make haste," said Courfeyrac; "in a quarter of an hour it will be too late."

"Citizens," continued Enjolras, "this is the Republic, and universal suffrage reigns. Designate yourselves those who ought to go."

They obeyed. In a few minutes five were unanimously designated and left the ranks.

"There are five!" exclaimed Marius.

There were only four uniforms.

"Well," resumed the five, "one must stay."

And it was who should stay and who should find reasons why the others should not stay. The generous quarrel recommenced.

"You, you have a wife who loves you." "As for you, you have your old mother." "You have neither father nor mother, what will become of your three little brothers?" "You are the father of five children." "You have a right to live, you are seventeen; it is too soon."

These grand revolutionary barricades were rendezvous of heroism. The improbable there was natural. These men were not astonished at each other.

"Be quick," repeated Courfeyrac.

Somebody cried out from the group to Marius:

"Designate yourself which must stay."

"Yes," said the five, "choose. We will obey you."

Marius now believed no emotion possible. Still at this idea, to select a man for death, all his blood flowed back toward his heart. He would have turned pale if he could have been paler.

He advanced toward the five, who smiled upon him, and each, his eye full of that grand flame which we see in the depth of history over the Thermopylæ, cried to him:

"Me! me! me!"

And Marius, in a stupor, counted them; there were still five! Then his eyes fell upon the four uniforms.

At this moment a fifth uniform dropped, as if from heaven, upon the four others.

The fifth man was saved.

Marius raised his eyes and saw M. Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean had just entered the barricade.

Whether by information obtained, or by instinct, or by chance, he came by the little Rue Mondétour. Thanks to his national guard dress he had passed easily.

The sentry placed by the insurgents in the Rue Mondétour had not given the signal of alarm for a single national guard. He permitted him to get into the street, saying to himself: "He is a reinforcement probably, and at the very



worst a prisoner." The moment was too serious for the sentinel to be diverted from his duty and his post of observation.

At the moment Jean Valjean entered the redoubt nobody had noticed him, all eyes being fixed upon the five chosen ones and upon the four uniforms. Jean Valjean, himself, saw and understood, and, silently, he stripped off his coat and threw it upon the pile with the others.

The commotion was indescribable.

"Who is this man?" asked Bossuet.

"He is," answered Combeferre, "a man who saves others."

Marius added in a grave voice:

"I know him."

This assurance was enough for all.

Enjolras turned toward Jean Valjean.

"Citizen, you are welcome."

And he added:

"You know that we are going to die."

Jean Valjean, without answering, helped the insurgent whom he saved to put on his uniform.

## V

WHAT HORIZON IS VISIBLE FROM THE TOP OF THE BARRICADE

**T**HE situation of all in this hour of death and in this inexorable place found its resultant and summit in the supreme melancholy of Enjolras.

Enjolras had within himself the plenitude of revolution; he was incomplete, notwithstanding, as much as the absolute can be; he clung too much to St. Just and not enough to Anacharsis Clootz; still his mind in the "Society of the Friends of the A B C" had at last received a certain polarization from the ideas of Combeferre; for some time he had been leaving little by little the narrow form of dogma and allowing himself to tread the broad paths of progress, and he had come to accept, as its definitive and magnificent evolution, the transformation of the great French Republic into the immense human republic. As to the immediate means, in a condition of violence, he wished them to be violent in that he had not varied; and

he was still of that epic and formidable school which is summed up in this word: "Ninety-three."

Enjolras was standing on the paving-stone steps, his elbow upon the muzzle of a carbine. He was thinking; he started, as at the passing of a gust; places where death is have such tripodal effects. There came from his eyes, full of the interior sight, a kind of stifled fire. Suddenly he raised his head, his fair hair waved backward like that of the angel upon his sombre car of stars; it was the mane of a startled lion flaming with a halo, and Enjolras exclaimed:

"Citizens, do you picture to yourselves the future? The streets of the cities flooded with light, green branches upon the thresholds, the nations sisters, men just, the old men blessing the children, the past loving the present, thinkers in full liberty, believers in full equality, for religion the heavens, God priest direct, human conscience become the altar, no more hatred, the fraternity of the workshop and the school, for reward and for penalty notoriety to all, labor for all, law, over all peace, no more bloodshed, no more war, mothers happy! To subdue matter is the first step; to realize the ideal is the second. Reflect upon what progress has already done. Once the early human races looked with terror upon the hydra which blew upon the waters, the dragon which vomited fire, the griffin, monster of the air, which flew with the wings of an eagle and the claws of a tiger; fearful animals which were above man. Man, however, has laid his snares, the sacred snares of intelligence, and has at last caught the monsters. We have tamed the hydra, and he is called the steamer; we have tamed the dragon, and he is called the locomotive; we are on the point of taming the griffin; we have him already, and he is called the balloon. The day when this promethean work shall be finished, and when man shall have definitely harnessed to his will the triple chimera of the ancients, the hydra, the dragon, and the griffin, he will be master of the water, the fire, and the air, and he will be to the rest of the animated creation what the ancient gods were formerly to him. Courage, and forward! Citizens, whither are we tending? To science-made government, to the force of things, recognized as the only public force, to the natural law having its sanction and its penalty in itself and pro-

mulgated by its self-evidence, to a dawn of truth, corresponding with the dawn of the day. We are tending toward the union of the peoples; we are tending toward the unity of man. No more fictions; no more parasites. The real governed by the true, such is the aim. Civilization will hold its courts on the summit of Europe, and later at the centre of the continents, in a grand parliament of intelligence. Something like this has been seen already. The Amphictyons had two sessions a year, one at Delphi, place of the gods, the other at Thermopylæ, place of the heroes. Europe will have her Amphictyons; the globe will have its Amphictyons. France bears within her the sublime future. This is the gestation of the nineteenth century. That which was sketched by Greece is worth being finished by France. Listen to me, then, Feuilly, valiant workingman, man of the people, man of the peoples, I venerate thee. Yes, thou seest clearly future ages; yes, thou art right. Thou hadst neither father nor mother, Feuilly; thou hast adopted humanity for thy mother and the right for thy father. Thou art going to die here; that is to triumph. Citizens, whatever may happen to-day through our defeat, as well as through our victory, we are going to effect a revolution. Just as conflagrations light up the whole city, revolutions light up the whole human race. And what revolution shall we effect? I have just said, the revolution of the true. From the political point of view, there is but one single principle—the sovereignty of man over himself. This sovereignty of myself over myself is called liberty. Where two or several of these sovereignties associate the state begins. But in this association there is no abdication. Each sovereignty gives up a certain portion of itself to form the common right. That portion is the same for all. This identity of concession which each makes to all, is equality. The common right is nothing more nor less than the protection of all radiating upon the right of each. This protection of all over each is called fraternity. The point of intersection of all these aggregated sovereignties is called society. This intersection being a junction, this point is a knot. Hence what is called the social tie. Some say social contract; which is the same thing, the word contract being etymologically formed with the idea of tie. Let us understand each other



in regard to equality; for, if liberty is the summit, equality is the base. Equality, citizens, is not all vegetation on a level; a society of big spears of grass and little oaks; a neighborhood of jealousies emasculating each other; it is, civilly, all aptitudes having equal opportunity; politically, all votes having equal weight; religiously, all consciences having equal rights. Equality has an organ; gratuitous and obligatory instruction. The right to the alphabet, we must begin by that. The primary school obligatory upon all, the higher school offered to all, such is the law. From the identical school springs equal society. Yes, instruction! Light! Light! All comes from light and all returns to it. Citizens, the nineteenth century is grand, but the twentieth century will be happy. Then there will be nothing more like old history. Men will no longer have to fear, as now, a conquest, an invasion, a usurpation, a rivalry of nations with the armed hand, an interruption of civilization depending on a marriage of kings, a birth in the hereditary tyrannies, a partition of the peoples by a congress, a dismemberment by the downfall of a dynasty, a combat of two religions meeting head to head, like two goats of darkness, upon the bridge of the infinite; they will no longer have to fear famine, speculation, prostitution from distress, misery from lack of work, and the scaffold and the sword and the battle and all the brigandages of chance in the forest of events. We might almost say: there will be no events more. Men will be happy. The human race will fulfil its law as the terrestrial globe fulfils its; harmony will be re-established between the soul and the star; the soul will gravitate about the truth like the star above the light. Friends, the hour in which we live and in which I speak to you is a gloomy hour, but of such is the terrible price of the future. A revolution is a toll-gate. Oh! the human race shall be delivered, uplifted, and consoled! We affirm it on this barricade. Whence shall arise the shout of love, if it be not from the summit of sacrifice? Oh, my brothers, here is the place of junction between those who think and those who suffer; this barricade is made neither of paving-stones, nor of timbers, nor of iron; it is made of two mounds, a mound of ideas and a mound of sorrows. Misery here encounters the ideal. Here day embraces night, and says: 'I will die with thee and thou

shalt be born again with me! From the pressure of all desolations faith gushes forth. Sufferings bring their agony here and ideas their immortality. This agony and this immortality are to mingle and compose our death. Brothers, he who dies here dies in the radiance of the future, and we are entering a grave illuminated by the dawn."

Enjolras broke off rather than ceased; his lips moved noiselessly, as if he were continuing to speak to himself; and they looked at him with attention, endeavoring still to hear. There was no applause; but they whispered for a long time. Speech being breath, the rustling of intellects resembles the rustling of leaves.

## VI

MARIUS HAGGARD, JAVERT LACONIC

**L**ET us tell what was passing in Marius' thoughts. Remember the condition of his mind. As we have just mentioned, all was now to him a dream. His understanding was troubled. Marius, we must insist, was under the shadow of the great black wings which open above the dying. He felt that he had entered the tomb, it seemed to him that he was already on the other side of the wall, and he no longer saw the faces of the living save with the eyes of one dead.

How came M. Fauchelevent there? Why was he there? What did he come to do? Marius put none of these questions. Besides, our despair having this peculiarity that it inwraps others as well as ourselves, it seemed logical to him that everybody should come to die.

Only he thought of Cosette with an oppression of the heart.

Moreover, M. Fauchelevent did not speak to him, did not look at him, and had not even the appearance of hearing him when Marius said: "I know him."

As for Marius, this attitude of M. Fauchelevent was a relief to him, and, if we might employ such a word for such impressions, we should say, pleased him. He had always felt it absolutely impossible to address a word to that enigmatic man, who to him was at once equivocal and imposing. It was also a very long time since he had seen

him; which, with Marius' timid and reserved nature, increased the impossibility still more.

The five men designated went out of the barricade by the little Rue Mondétour; they resembled national guards perfectly; one of them went away weeping. Before starting they embraced those who remained.

When the five men sent away into life had gone Enjolras thought of the one condemned to death. He went into the basement-room. Javert, tied to the pillar, was thinking.

"Do you need anything?" Enjolras asked him.

Javert answered:

"When shall you kill me?"

"Wait. We need all our cartridges at present."

"Then give me a drink," said Javert.

Enjolras presented him with a glass of water himself, and, as Javert was bound, he helped him to drink.

"Is that all?" resumed Enjolras.

"I am uncomfortable at this post," answered Javert. "It was not affectionate to leave me to pass the night here. Tie me as you please, but you can surely lay me on a table. Like the other."

And with a motion of the head he indicated M. Mabeuf's body.

There was, it will be remembered, at the back of the room, a long wide table, upon which they had cast balls and made cartridges. All the cartridges being made and all the powder used up, this table was free.

At Enjolras' order, four insurgents untied Javert from the post. While they were untying him a fifth held a bayonet to his breast. They left his hands tied behind his back, they put a small yet strong whipcord about his feet, which permitted him to take fifteen-inch steps like those who are mounting the scaffold, and they made him walk to the table at the back of the room, on which they extended him, tightly bound by the middle of his body.

For the greater security, by means of a rope fixed to his neck, they added to the system of bonds which rendered all escape impossible that species of ligature called in the prisons a martingale, which, starting from the back of the neck, divides over the stomach, and is fastened to the hands after passing between the legs.



While they were binding Javert a man, on the threshold of the door, gazed at him with singular attention. The shade which this man produced made Javert turn his head. He raised his eyes and recognized Jean Valjean. He did not even start, he haughtily dropped his eyelids, and merely said: "It is very natural."

## VII

### THE SITUATION GROWS SERIOUS

IT was growing light rapidly. But not a window was opened, not a door stood ajar; it was the dawn, not the hour of awakening. The extremity of the Rue de la Chanvrerie opposite the barricade had been evacuated by the troops, as we have said. It seemed free, and lay open for wayfarers with an ominous tranquillity. The Rue Saint Denis was as silent as the avenue of the Sphinxes at Thebes. Not a living being at the corners, which were whitening in a reflection of the sun. Nothing is so dismal as this brightness of deserted streets.

They saw nothing, but they heard. A mysterious movement was taking place at some distance. It was evident that the critical moment was at hand. As in the evening, the sentries were driven in; but this time all.

The barricade was stronger than at the time of the first attack. Since the departure of the five it had been raised still higher.

On the report of the sentry who had been observing the region of the markets, Enjolras, for fear of a surprise from the rear, formed an important resolution. He had barricaded the little passage of the Rue Mondétour, which till then had been open. For this purpose they unpaved the length of a few more houses. In this way the barricade, walled in upon three streets, in front upon the Rue de la Chanvrerie, at the left upon the Rue du Cygne and La Petite Truanderie, at the right upon the Rue Mondétour, was really almost impregnable; it is true that they were fatally shut in. It had three fronts, but no longer an outlet. "A fortress, but mouse-trap," said Courfeyrac with a laugh.

Enjolras had piled up near the door of the wine-shop

some thirty paving-stones, "torn up uselessly," said Bos-suet.

The silence was now so profound on the side from which the attack must come that Enjolras made each man resume his post for combat.

A ration of brandy was distributed to all.

Nothing is more singular than a barricade which is preparing for an assault. Each man chooses his place as at a play. They lean on their sides, their elbows, their shoulders. There are some who make themselves stalls with paving-stones. There is a corner of a wall which is annoying, they move away from it; here is a redan which may be a protection, they take shelter in it. The left-handed are precious; they take places which are inconvenient for the rest. Many make arrangements to fight sitting down. They wish to be at their ease in killing and comfortable in dying. In the deadly war of June, 1848, an insurgent, who had a terrible aim, and who fought from the top of a terrace, on a roof, had a Voltaire arm-chair carried up there; a charge of grape found him in it.

As soon as the chief has ordered the decks cleared for the fight, all disorderly movements cease; no more skirmishing with one another; no more coteries; no more asides; no more standing apart; that which is in all minds converges and changes into expectation of the assailant. A barricade before danger, chaos; in danger, discipline. Peril produces order.

As soon as Enjolras had taken his double-barreled carbine and placed himself on a kind of battlement which he had reserved, all were silent. A little dry snapping sound was heard confusedly along the wall of paving-stones. They were cocking their muskets.

Moreover, their bearing was firmer and more confident than ever; excess of sacrifice is a support; they had hope no longer, but they had despair. Despair, final arm, which sometimes gives victory; Virgil has said so. Supreme resources spring from extreme resolutions. To embark in death is sometimes the means of escaping a shipwreck; and the coffin-lid becomes a plank of safety.

As on the evening before, the attention of all was turned, and we might almost say threw its weight upon the end of the street. now lighted and visible.

They had not long to wait. Activity distinctly recommenced in the direction of St. Leu, but it did not resemble the movement of the first attack. A rattle of chains, the menacing jolt of a mass, a clicking of brass bounding over the pavement, a sort of solemn uproar, announced that an ominous body of iron was approaching. There was a shudder in the midst of those peaceful old streets, cut through and built up for the fruitful circulation of interests and ideas, and which were not made for the monstrous rumbling of the wheels of war.

The stare of all the combatants upon the extremity of the street became wild.

A piece of artillery appeared.

The gunners pushed forward the piece; it was all ready to be loaded; the fore wheels had been removed; two supported the carriage, four were at the wheels, others followed with the caisson. The smoke of the burning match was seen.

"Fire!" cried Enjolras.

The whole barricade flashed fire, the explosion was terrible; an avalanche of smoke covered and effaced the gun and the men; in a few seconds the cloud dissipated and the cannon and the men reappeared; those in charge of the piece placed it in position in front of the barricade, slowly, correctly, and without haste. Not a man had been touched. Then the gunner, bearing his weight on the breech to elevate the range, began to point the cannon with the gravity of an astronomer adjusting a telescope.

"Bravo for the gunners!" cried Bossuet.

And the whole barricade clapped hands.

A moment afterward, placed squarely in the very middle of the street, astride of the gutter, the gun was in battery. A formidable mouth was opened upon the barricade.

"Come, be lively!" said Courfeyrac. "There is the brute. After the fillip the knock-down. The army stretches out its big paw to us. The barricade is going to be seriously shaken. The musketry feels, the artillery takes."

"It is a bronze eight-pounder, new model," added Combeferre. "Those pieces, however little they exceed the proportion of ten parts of tin to one hundred of copper, are liable to burst. The excess of tin makes them too tender. In that case they have hollows and chambers in the



vent. To obviate this danger, and to be able to force out the load, it would be necessary, perhaps, to return to the process of the fourteenth century, hooping, and to strengthen a piece exteriorly, by a succession of steel rings unsoldered, from the breech to the trunnion. In the meanwhile, they remedy the defect as they can; they find out where the holes and the hollows in the bore of a cannon are by means of a searcher. But there is a better way, that is the movable star of Gribeauval."

"In the sixteenth century," observed Bossuet, "they rifled their cannon."

"Yes," answered Combeferre, "that augments the ballistic power, but diminishes the accuracy of the aim. In a short range the trajectory has not the stiffness desirable; the parabola is exaggerated, the path of the projectile is not rectilinear enough to permit it to hit the intermediate objects, a necessity of combat, however, the importance of which increases with the proximity of the enemy and the rapidity of the firing. This want of tension in the curve of the projectile, in the rifled cannon of the sixteenth century, is due to the feebleness of the charge; feeble charges, for this kind of arm, are required by the necessities of ballistics, such, for instance, as the preservation of the carriages. Upon the whole, artillery, that despot, can not do all it would; strength is a great weakness. A cannon ball makes only 2,000 miles an hour; light makes 200,000 miles a second. Such is the superiority of Jesus Christ over Napoleon."

"Reload arms," said Enjolras.

How was the facing of the barricade going to behave under fire?

Would the shot make a breach? That was the question. While the insurgents were reloading their muskets the gunners loaded the cannon.

There was intense anxiety in the redoubt.

The gun went off; the detonation burst upon them.

"Present!" cried a cheerful voice.

And at the same time with the ball Gavroche tumbled into the barricade.

He came by way of the Rue du Cygne, and he had nimbly clambered over the minor barricade, which fronted upon the labyrinth of the Petite Truanderie.

Gavroche produced more effect in the barricade than the ball.

The ball lost itself in the jumble of the rubbish. At the very utmost it broke a wheel of the omnibus, and finished the old Anceau cart. Seeing which, the barricade began to laugh.

"Proceed," cried Bossuet to the gunners.

## VIII

### THE GUNNERS PRODUCE A SERIOUS IMPRESSION

THEY surrounded Gavroche.

But he had no time to tell anything. Marius, shuddering, took him aside.

"What have you come here for?"

"Hold on!" said the boy. "What have you come for?"

And he looked straight at Marius with his epic effrontery. His eyes grew large with the proud light which was in them.

Marius continued in a stern tone:

"Who told you to come back? At least you carried my letter to its address?"

Gavroche had some little remorse in relation to that letter. In his haste to return to the barricade he had got rid of it rather than delivered it. He was compelled to acknowledge to himself that he had intrusted it rather rashly to that stranger whose face even he could not distinguish. True, this man was bareheaded, but that was not enough. On the whole, he had some little interior remonstrances on this subject and he feared Marius' reproaches. He took to get out of the trouble the simplest course; he lied abominably.

"Citizen, I carried the letter to the porter. The lady was asleep. She will get the letter when she wakes up."

Marius, in sending this letter, had two objects, to say farewell to Cosette and to save Gavroche. He was obliged to be content with the half of what he intended.

The sending of this letter and the presence of M. Fauchelevent in the barricade, this coincidence occurred to his mind. He pointed out M. Fauchelevent to Gavroche.

"Do you know that man?"

"No," said Gavroche.

Gavroche, in fact, as we have just mentioned, had only seen Jean Valjean in the night.

The trouble and sickly conjectures which had arisen in Marius' mind were dissipated. Did he know M. Fauchelevent's opinions? M. Fauchelevent was a republican, perhaps. Hence his very natural presence in this conflict.

Meanwhile Gavroche was already at the other end of the barricade, crying: "My musket!"

Courfeyrac ordered it to be given him.

Gavroche warned his "comrades," as he called them, that the barricade was surrounded. He had had great difficulty in getting through. A battalion of the line, whose muskets were stacked in La Petite Truanderie, were observing the side on the Rue du Cygne; on the opposite side the municipal guard occupied the Rue des Prêcheurs, in front they had the bulk of the army.

The information given, Gavroche added:

"I authorize you to give them a dose of pills."

Meanwhile Enjolras on his battlement was watching, listening with intense attention.

The assailants, dissatisfied doubtless with the effect of their fire, had not repeated it.

A company of infantry of the line had come in and occupied the extremity of the street in the rear of the gun. The soldiers tore up the pavement and with the stones constructed a little low wall, a sort of breastwork, which was hardly more than eighteen inches high and which fronted the barricade. At the corner, on the left of this breastwork, they saw the head of the column of a battalion of the banlieue massed in the Rue Saint Denis.

Enjolras, on the watch, thought he distinguished the peculiar sound which is made when canisters of grape are taken from the caisson, and he saw the gunner change the aim and incline the piece slightly to the left. Then the cannoneers began to load. The gunner seized the linstock himself and brought it near the touch-hole.

"Heads down; keep close to the wall!" cried Enjolras, "and all on your knees along the barricade!"

The insurgents who were scattered in front of the wine-shop, and who had left their posts of combat on Gavroche's



arrival, rushed pell-mell toward the barricade; but before Enjolras' order was executed the discharge took place with the fearful rattle of grape-shot. It was so in fact.

The charge was directed at the opening of the redoubt, it ricocheted upon the wall, and this terrible ricochet killed two men and wounded three.

If that continued the barricade was no longer tenable. It was not proof against grape.

There was a sound of consternation.

"Let us prevent the second shot, at any rate," said Enjolras.

And, lowering his carbine, he aimed at the gunner, who, at that moment, bending over the breech of the gun, was correcting and finally adjusting the aim.

The gunner was a fine-looking sergeant of artillery, quite young, of fair complexion, with a very mild face, and the intelligent air peculiar to that predestined and formidable arm which, by perfecting itself in horror, must end in killing war.

Combeferre, standing near Enjolras, looked at this young man.

"What a pity!" said Combeferre. "What a hideous thing these butcheries are! Come, when there are no more kings there will be no more war. Enjolras, you are aiming at that sergeant, you are not looking at him. Just think that he is a charming young man; he is intrepid; you see that he is a thinker; these young artillerymen are well educated; he has a father, a mother, a family; he is in love, probably; he is at most twenty-five years old; he might be your brother."

"He is," said Enjolras.

"Yes," said Combeferre, "and mine also. Well don't let us kill him."

"Let me alone. We must do what we must."

A tear rolled slowly down Enjolras' marble cheek.

At the same time he pressed the trigger of his carbine.

The flash leaped forth. The artilleryman turned twice around, his arms stretched out before him, and his head raised as if to drink the air, then he fell over on his side upon the gun and lay there motionless. His back could be seen, from the centre of which a stream of blood gushed

upward. The ball had entered his breast and passed through his body. He was dead.

It was necessary to carry him away and to replace him. It was, indeed, some minutes gained.

## IX

USE OF THAT OLD POACHER'S SKILL AND THAT INFALLIBLE SHOT WHICH INFLUENCED THE CONVICTION OF 1796

**T**HERE was confusion in the counsel of the barricade. The gun was about to be fired again. They could not hold out a quarter of an hour in that storm of grape. It was absolutely necessary to deaden the blows.

Enjolras threw out his command:

"We must put a mattress there."

"We have none," said Combeferre, "the wounded are on them."

Jean Valjean, seated apart on a block at the corner of the wine-shop, his musket between his knees, had, up to this moment, taken no part in what was going on. He seemed not to hear the combatants about him say: "There is a musket which is doing nothing!"

At the order given by Enjolras he got up.

It will be remembered that on the arrival of the company in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, an old woman, foreseeing bullets, had put her mattress before her window. This window, a garret window, was on the roof of a house of six stories, standing a little outside of the barricade. The mattress, placed crosswise, rested at the bottom upon two clothes-poles, and was sustained above by two ropes, which, in the distance, seemed like threads, and which were fastened to nails driven into the window casing. These two ropes could be seen distinctly against the sky like hairs.

"Can somebody lend me a double-barreled carbine?" said Jean Valjean.

Enjolras, who had just reloaded his, handed it to him.

Jean Valjean aimed at the window and fired.

One of the two ropes of the mattress was cut.

The mattress now hung only by one thread.

Jean Valjean fired the second barrel. The second rope

struck the glass of the window. The mattress slid down between the two poles and fell into the street.

The barricade applauded.

All cried:

"There is a mattress."

"Yes," said Combeferre, "but who will go after it?"

The mattress had, in fact, fallen outside of the barricade, between the besieged and the besiegers. Now, the death of the gunner having exasperated the troops, the soldiers, for some moments, had been lying on their faces behind the line of paving-stones which they had raised, and, to make up for the compulsory silence of the gun, which was quiet while its service was being reorganized, they had opened fire upon the barricade. The insurgents made no response to this musketry, to spare their ammunition. The fusillade was broken against the barricade; but the street, which it filled with balls, was terrible.

Jean Valjean went out at the opening, entered the street, passed through the storm of balls, went to the mattress, picked it up, put it on his back and returned to the barricade.

He put the mattress into the opening himself. He fixed it against the wall in such a way that the artillerymen did not see it.

This done, they awaited the charge of grape.

They had not long to wait.

The cannon vomited its package of shot with a roar. But there was no ricochet. The grape miscarried upon the mattress. The desired effect was obtained. The barricade was preserved.

"Citizen," said Enjolras to Jean Valjean, "the Republic thanks you."

Bossuet admired and laughed. He exclaimed:

"It is immoral that a mattress should have so much power. Triumph of that which yields over that which thunders. But it is all the same; glory to the mattress which nullifies a cannon."



## X

## DAWN

AT that moment Cosette awoke.

Her room was small, neat, retired, with a long window to the east looking upon the back yard of the house.

Cosette knew nothing of what was going on in Paris. She had not been out of her room in the evening, and she had already withdrawn to it when Toussaint said: "It appears that there is a row."

Cosette had slept few hours, but well. She had had sweet dreams, which was partly owing perhaps to her little bed being very white. Somebody who was Marius had appeared to her surrounded by a halo. She awoke with the sun in her eyes, which at first produced the effect of a continuation of her dream.

Her first emotion on coming out of this dream was joyous. Cosette felt entirely reassured. She was passing through, as Jean Valjean had done a few hours before, that reaction of the soul which absolutely refuses woe. She began to hope with all her might without knowing why. Then came an oppression of the heart. Here were three days now that she had not seen Marius. But she said to herself that he must have received her letter, that he knew where she was, and that he had so much tact that he would find means to reach her. And that certainly to-day, and perhaps this very morning. It was broad day, but the rays of light were very horizontal; she thought it was very early; that she must get up, however, to receive Marius.

She felt that she could not live without Marius, and that consequently that was enough, and that Marius would come. No objection was admissible. All that was certain. It was monstrous enough already to have suffered three days. Marius absent three days, it was horrible in the good God. Now this cruel sport of Heaven was an ordeal that was over. Marius was coming and would bring good news. Thus is youth constituted; it quickly wipes its eyes; it believes sorrow useless and does not accept it. Youth is the smile of the future before an

unknown being which is itself. It is natural for it to be happy. It seems as though it breathed hope.

Besides, Cosette could not succeed in recalling what Marius had said to her on the subject of this absence which was to last but one day or what explanation he had given her about it. Everybody has noticed with what address a piece of money which you drop on the floor runs and hides, and what art it has in rendering itself undiscoverable. There are thoughts which play us the same trick; they hide in a corner of our brain; it is all over; they are lost; impossible to put the memory back upon them. Cosette was a little vexed at the useless petty efforts which her recollection made. She said to herself that it was very naughty of her and very wicked to have forgotten words uttered by Marius.

She got up and formed the two ablutions of the soul and the body, her prayer and her toilet.

We may in extreme cases introduce the reader into a nuptial chamber, not into a maiden's chamber. Verse would hardly dare, prose ought not.

It is the interior of a flower yet unblown, it is a whiteness in the shade, it is the inmost cell of a closed lily which ought not to be looked upon by man, while yet it has not been looked upon by the sun. Woman in the bud is sacred. The innocent bed which is thrown open, the adorable semi-nudity which is afraid of itself, the white foot which takes refuge in a slipper, the bosom which veils itself before a mirror as if that mirror were an eye; the chemise which hastens up to hide the shoulder at the snapping of a piece of furniture, or at the passing of a wagon, the ribbons tied, the clasps hooked, the lacings drawn, the starts, the shivers of cold and of modesty, the exquisite shyness in every movement, the almost winged anxiety where there is no cause for fear; the successive phases of the dress as charming as the clouds of the dawn; it is not fitting that all this should be described, and it is too much, indeed, to refer to it.

The eye of man should be more religious still before the rising of a young maiden than before the rising of a star. The possibility of touch should increase respect. The down of the peach, the dust of the plum, the radiated crystal of the snow, the butterfly's wings powdered with

feathers, are gross things in presence of that chastity which does not even know that it is chaste. The young maiden is only the gleam of a dream, and is not yet a statue. Her alcove is hidden in the shadows of the ideal. The indiscreet touch of the eye defaces this dim penumbra. Here to gaze is to profane.

We will show nothing, then, of all that pleasant little confusion on Cosette's awakening.

An eastern tale relates that the rose was made white by God, but that Adam, having looked at it at the moment it was half-opened, it was ashamed and blushed. We are of those who feel themselves speechless before young maidens and flowers, finding them venerable.

Cosette dressed herself very quickly, combed and arranged her hair, which was a very simple thing at that time, when women did not puff out their ringlets and plaits with cushions and rolls, did not put crinoline in their hair. Then she opened the window and looked all about, hoping to discover something of the street, a corner of a house, a patch of pavement, and to be able to watch for Marius there. But she could see nothing of the street. The back yard was surrounded with high walls, and a few gardens only were in view. Cosette pronounced these gardens hideous; for the first time in her life she found flowers ugly. The least bit of a street gutter would have been more to her mind. She finally began to look at the sky, as if she thought that Marius might come that way also.

Suddenly she melted into tears. Not that it was fickleness of soul; but, hopes cut off by faintness of heart, such was her situation. She vaguely felt some indefinable horror. Things float in the air in fact. She said to herself that she was not sure of anything; that to lose from sight, was to lose; and the idea that Marius might indeed return to her from the sky appeared no longer charming, but dismal.

Then, such are these clouds, calmness returned to her, and hope, and a sort of smile, unconscious, but trusting in God.

Everybody was still in bed in the house. A rural silence reigned. No shutter had been opened. The porter's box was closed. Toussaint was not up, and Cosette



very naturally thought that her father was asleep. She must have suffered, indeed, and she must have been still suffering, for she said to herself that her father had been unkind; but she counted on Marius. The eclipse of such a light was entirely impossible. At intervals she heard at some distance a kind of sullen jar, and she said: "It is singular that people are opening and shutting *portecochères* so early." It was the cannon battering the barricade.

There was, a few feet below Cosette's window, in the old black cornice of the wall, a nest of martins; the corbel of this nest made a little projection beyond the cornice, so that the inside of this little paradise could be seen from above. The mother was there, opening her wings like a fan over her brood; the father flew about, went away, then returned, bringing in his bill food and kisses. The rising day gilded this happy thing, the great law multiply was there smiling and august, and this sweet mystery was blossoming in the glory of the morning. Cosette, her hair in the sunshine, her soul in chimera, made luminous by love within and the dawn without, bent over as if mechanically, and, almost without daring to acknowledge to herself that she was thinking of Marius at the same time, began to look at these birds, this family, this male and this female, this mother and these little ones, with the deep restlessness which a nest gives to a maiden.

## XI

### THE SHOT WHICH MISSES NOTHING AND KILLS NOBODY

THE fire of the assailants continued. The musketry and the grape alternated, without much damage, indeed. The top of the façade of Corinth alone suffered; the window of the first story and the dormer windows on the roof, riddled with shot and ball, were slowly demolished. The combatants who were posted there had to withdraw.

Besides, this is the art of attacking barricades: to tease for a long time, in order to exhaust the ammunition of the insurgents, if they commit the blunder of replying. When it is perceived, from the slackening of their fire, that they

have no longer either balls or powder; the assault is made. Enjolras did not fall into this snare; the barricade did not reply.

At each platoon fire Gavroche thrust out his cheek with his tongue, a mark of lofty disdain:

"That's right," said he, "tear up the cloth. We want lint."

Courfeyrac jested with the grape about its lack of effect, and said to the cannon:

"You are getting diffuse, my good man."

In a battle people force themselves upon acquaintance as at a ball. It is probable that this silence of the redoubt began to perplex the besiegers and make them fear some unlooked-for accident; and that they felt the need of seeing through that heap of paving-stones, and knowing what was going on behind that impassible wall, which was receiving their fire without answering it. The insurgents suddenly perceived a casque shining in the sun upon a neighboring roof. A sapper was backed up against a tall chimney, and seemed to be there as a sentinel. He looked directly into the barricade.

"There is a troublesome overseer," said Enjolras.

Jean Valjean had returned his carbine to Enjolras, but he had his musket.

Without saying a word he aimed at the sapper, and, a second afterward, the casque, struck by a ball, fell noisily into the street. The startled soldier hastened to disappear.

A second observer took his place. This was an officer. Jean Valjean, who had reloaded his musket, aimed at the newcomer, and sent the officer's casque to keep company with the soldier's. The officer was not obstinate, and withdrew very quickly. This time the warning was understood. Nobody appeared upon the roof again, and they gave up watching the barricade.

"Why didn't you kill the man?" asked Bossuet of Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean did not answer.

## XII

## DISORDER A PARTISAN OF ORDER

**B**OSSUET murmured in Combeferre's ear:  
"He has not answered my question."

"He is a man who does kindness by musket-shot," said Combeferre.

Those who retain some recollection of that now distant period know that the national guard of the banlieue was valiant against the insurrections. It was particularly eager and intrepid in the days of June, 1832. Many a good wine-shop keeper of Pantin, of the Vertus, or of La Cunette, whose "establishment" was without custom in consequence of the *émeute*, became leonine on seeing his dancing-hall deserted, and died to preserve order represented by the tavern. In those days, at once bourgeois and heroic, in presence of ideas which had their knights, interests had their paladins. The prosaic motive detracted nothing from the bravery of the action. The decrease of a pile of crowns made bankers sing the "*Marseillaise*." They poured out their blood lyrically for the counter; and with a Lacedæmonian enthusiasm they defended the shop, that immense diminutive of one's native land.

In reality, we must say, there was nothing in all this which was not very serious. It was the social elements entering into conflict while awaiting the day when they shall enter into equilibrium.

Another sign of that time was anarchy mingled with governmentalism (barbarous name of the correct party). Men were for order without discipline. The drum beat unawares, at the command of some colonel of the national guard, capricious roll-calls; many a captain went to the fire by inspiration; many a national guard fought "from fancy," and on his own account. In the critical moments, on the "days," they took counsel less of their chiefs than of their instincts. There were in the army of order genuine guerillas, some of the sword like Fannicot; others of the pen like Henri Fonfrède.

Civilization, unfortunately represented at that epoch rather by an aggregation of interests than by a group of



principles, was, or thought itself, in peril; it raised the cry of alarm; every man making himself a centre, defended it, aided it, and protected it, in his own way; and anybody and everybody took it upon himself to save society.

Zeal sometimes goes to the extent of extermination. Such a platoon of national guards constituted themselves, of their own private authority, a court-martial, and condemned and executed an insurgent prisoner in five minutes. It was an improvisation of this kind which had killed Jean Prouvaire. Ferocious lynch law, with which no party has the right to reproach others, for it is applied by the republic in America as well as by the monarchy in Europe. This lynch law is liable to mistakes. During an émeute a young poet, named Paul Aimé Garnier, was pursued in the Place Royale at the point of the bayonet, and only escaped by taking refuge under the *porte-cochère* of No. 6. The cry was: "There is another of those St. Simonians!" and there was an attempt to kill him. Now, he had under his arm a volume of the memoirs of the Duke de St. Simon. A national guard had read upon this book the name: "St. Simon," and cried: "Kill him!"

On the 6th of June, 1832, a company of national guards of the banlieue, commanded by Capt. Fannicot, before mentioned, got themselves, through whim, and for sport's sake, decimated in the Rue de la Chanvrerie. The fact, singular as it may seem, was proved by the judicial investigation entered upon after the insurrection of 1832. Capt. Fannicot, a bold and impatient bourgeois, a kind of *condottiere* of the order of those we have just characterized, a fanatical and insubordinate governmentalist, could not resist the impulse to open fire before the hour, and the ambition of taking the barricade by himself all alone, that is, with his company. Exasperated by the successive appearance of the red flag and the old coat, which he took for the black flag, he loudly blamed the generals and chiefs of corps, who were holding counsel, and did not deem that the moment for the decisive assault had come, and were leaving, according to a celebrated expression of one of them, "the insurrection to cook in its own juice." As for him, he thought the barricade ripe, and, as what is ripe ought to fall, he made the attempt.

He commanded men as resolute as himself. "Madmen," said a witness. His company, the same which had shot the poet Jean Prouvaire, was the first of the battalion posted at the corner of the street. At the moment when it was least expected, the captain hurled his men against the barricade. The movement, executed with more zeal than strategy, cost the Fannicot company dear. Before it had passed over two-thirds of the street it was greeted by a general discharge from the barricade. Four, the most daring, who were running in advance, were shot down at the muzzles of the muskets, at the very foot of the redoubt; and this courageous mob of national guards, very brave men, but who had no military tenacity, had to fall back, after some hesitation, leaving fifteen dead upon the pavement. The moment of hesitation gave the insurgents time to reload; and a second discharge, very murderous, reached the company before it was able to regain the corner of the street, its shelter. At one moment it was taken between two storms of balls, and it received the volley of the piece of battery which, receiving no orders, had not discontinued its fire. The intrepid and imprudent Fannicot was one of the killed by this volley. He was slain by the cannon, that is to say, by order.

This attack, more furious than serious, irritated Enjolras. "The fools!" said he. "They are getting their men killed and using up our ammunition for nothing."

Enjolras spoke like the true general of émeute that he was. Insurrection and repression do not contend with equal arms. Insurrection, readily exhaustible, has but a certain number of shots to fire and but a certain number of combatants to expend. A cartridge-box emptied, a man killed, are not replaced. Repression, having the army, does not count men, and, having Vincennes, does not count shots. Repression has as many regiments as the barricade has men and as many arsenals as the barricade has cartridge-boxes. Thus, they are struggles of one against a hundred which always end in the destruction of the barricades; unless revolution, abruptly appearing, casts into the balance its flaming archangel's sword. That happens. Then everything rises, the pavements begin to ferment, the redoubts of the people swarm, Paris thrills sovereignly, the *quid divinum* is set free, a 10th of August is

in the air, a 29th of July is in the air, a marvelous light appears, the yawning jaws of force recoil and the army, that lion, sees before it, erect and tranquil, this prophet, France.

### XIII

#### GLEAMS WHICH PASS

**I**N THE chaos of sentiments and passions which defend a barricade there is something of everything; there is bravery, youth, honor, enthusiasm, the ideal, conviction, the eager fury of the gamester, and, above all, intervals of hope.

One of those intervals, one of those vague thrills of hope, suddenly crossed, at the most unexpected moment, the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

"Hark!" abruptly exclaimed Enjolras, who was constantly on the alert, "it seems to me that Paris is waking."

It is certain that on the morning of the 6th of June the insurrection had, for an hour or two, a certain recrudescence. The obstinacy of the tocsin of St. Merry reanimated some dull hopes. In the Rue du Poirier, in the Rue des Gravilliers, barricades were planned out. In front of the Porte St. Martin, a young man, armed with a carbine, attacked singly a squadron of cavalry. Without any shelter, in the open boulevard, he dropped on one knee, raised his weapon to his shoulder, fired, killed the chief of the squadron, and turned round saying: "There is another who will do us no more harm." He was sabred. In the Rue Saint Denis a woman fired upon the municipal guard from behind a Venetian blind. The slats of the blind were seen to tremble at each report. A boy of fourteen was arrested in the Rue de la Cossonerie with his pockets full of cartridges. Several posts were attacked. At the entrance of the Rue Bertin Poirée a very sharp and entirely unexpected fusillade greeted a regiment of cuirassiers, at the head of which marched Gen. Cavaignac de Baragne. In the Rue Planche Mibray they threw upon the troops, from the roofs, old fragments of household vessels and utensils; a bad sign; and when this fact was reported to Marshal Soult, the old lieutenant of Napoleon grew thoughtful, remembering the saying of Suchet at



Saragossa: "We are lost when the old women empty their pots upon our heads."

These general symptoms which were manifested just when it was supposed the émeute was localized, this fever of wrath which was regaining the upper hand, these sparks which flew here and there above those deep masses of combustible material which are called the Faubourgs of Paris, all taken together rendered the military chiefs anxious. They hastened to extinguish these beginnings of conflagration. They delayed, until these sparks should be quenched, the attack on the Barricades Maubuée, De la Chanvrière, and St. Merry, that they might have them only to deal with, and might be able to finish all at one blow. Columns were thrown into the streets in fermentation, sweeping the large ones, probing the small, on the right, on the left, sometimes slowly and with precaution, sometimes at a double-quick step. The troops beat in the doors of the houses from which they had seen firing; at the same time manœuvres of cavalry dispersed the groups on the boulevards. This repression was not accomplished without noise, nor without that tumultuous uproar peculiar to shocks between the army and the people. This was what Enjolras caught, in the intervals of the cannonade and the musketry. Besides, he had seen some wounded passing at the end of the street upon litters and said to Courfeyrac: "Those wounded do not come from our fire."

The hope did not last long; the gleam was soon eclipsed. In less than half an hour that which was in the air vanished; it was like heat lightning, and the insurgents felt that kind of leaden pall fall upon them which the indifference of the people casts over the wilful when abandoned.

The general movement, which seemed to have been vaguely projected, had miscarried; and the attention of the minister of war and the strategy of the generals could now be concentrated upon the three or four barricades remaining standing.

The sun rose above the horizon.

An insurgent called to Enjolras:

"We are hungry here. Are we really going to die like this without eating?"

Enjolras, still leaning upon his battlement, without taking his eyes off the extremity of the street, nodded his head.

## XIV

IN WHICH WILL BE FOUND THE NAME OF ENJOLRAS'  
MISTRESS

COURFEYRAC, seated on a paving-stone beside Enjolras, continued his insults to the cannon, and every time that gloomy cloud of projectiles which is known by the name of grape passed by with its monstrous sound, he received it with an outburst of irony.

"You are tiring your lungs, my poor old brute, you trouble me, you are wasting your racket. That is not thunder; no, it is a cough."

And those about him laughed.

Courfeyrac and Bossuet, whose valiant good-humor increased with the danger, like Mme. Scarron, replaced food by pleasantry, and, as they had no wine, poured out cheerfulness for all.

"I admire Enjolras," said Bossuet. "His impassive boldness astonishes me. He lives alone, which renders him, perhaps, a little sad. Enjolras suffers for his greatness, which binds him to widowhood. The rest of us have all, more or less, mistresses who make fools of us, that is to say, braves. When we are as amorous as a tiger, the least we can do is to fight like a lion. It is a way of avenging ourselves for the tricks which mesdames our grisettes play us. Roland gets himself killed to spite Angelica; all our heroism comes from our women. A man without a woman is a pistol without a hammer; it is the woman who makes the man go off. Now, Enjolras has no woman. He is not in love, and he finds a way to be intrepid. It is marvelous that a man can be as cold as ice and as bold as fire."

Enjolras did not appear to listen, but had anybody been near him he would have heard him murmur in an undertone: "*Patria*."

Bossuet was laughing still when Courfeyrac exclaimed: "Something new!"

And, assuming the manner of an usher announcing an arrival, he added:

"My name is Eight-Pounder."

In fact, a new personage had just entered upon the scene. It was a second piece of ordnance.

The artillerymen quickly executed the manoeuvres, and placed this second piece in battery near the first.

This suggested the conclusion.

A few moments later the two pieces, rapidly served, opened directly upon the redoubt; the platoon firing of the line and the banlieue supported the artillery.

Another cannonade was heard at some distance. At the same time that two cannon were raging against the redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie two other pieces of ordnance pointed, one on the Rue Saint Denis, the other on the Rue Aubry le Boucher, were riddling the Barricade St. Merry. The four cannon made dreary echo to one another.

The bayings of the dismal dogs of war answered each other.

Of the two pieces which were now battering the barricade in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, one fired grape, the other ball.

The gun which threw balls was elevated a little and the range was calculated so that the ball struck the extreme edge of the upper ridge of the barricade, dismantled it, and crumbled the paving-stones over the insurgents in showers.

This peculiar aim was intended to drive the combatants from the summit of the redoubt, and to force them to crowd together in the interior, that is, it announced the assault.

The combatants once driven from the top of the barricade by the balls and from the windows of the wine-shop by the grape, the attacking columns could venture into the street without being watched, perhaps even without being under fire, suddenly scale the redoubt, as on the evening before, and, who knows? take it by surprise.

"We must at all events diminish the inconvenience of those pieces," said Enjolras, and he cried: "Fire upon the cannoneers!"

All were ready. The barricade, which had been silent for a long time, opened fire desperately; seven or eight discharges succeeded each other with a sort of rage and joy; the street was filled with a blinding smoke, and after a few minutes, through this haze pierced by flame, they could



confusedly make out two-thirds of the cannoneers lying under the wheels of the guns. Those who remained standing continued to serve the pieces with rigid composure, but the fire was slackened.

"This goes well," said Bossuet to Enjolras. "Success."

Enjolras shook his head and answered:

"A quarter of an hour more of this success and there will not be ten cartridges in the barricade."

It would seem that Gavroche heard this remark.

## XV

### GAVROCHE OUTSIDE

COURFEYRAC suddenly perceived somebody at the foot of the barricade, outside in the street, under the balls.

Gavroche had taken a basket from the wine-shop, had gone out by the opening and was quietly occupied in emptying into his basket the full cartridge-boxes of the national guards who had been killed on the slope of the redoubt.

"What are you doing down there?" said Courfeyrac.

Gavroche cocked up his nose.

"Citizen, I am filling my basket."

"Why, don't you see the grape?"

Gavroche answered:

"Well, it rains. What then?"

Courfeyrac cried:

"Come back!"

"Directly," said Gavroche.

And, with a bound, he sprang into the street.

It will be remembered that the Fannicot company, on retiring, had left behind them a trail of corpses.

Some twenty dead lay scattered along the whole length of the street on the pavement. Twenty cartridge-boxes for Gavroche, a goodly supply of cartridges for the barricade.

The smoke in the street was like a fog. Whoever has seen a cloud fall into a mountain gorge between two steep slopes can imagine this smoke crowded and as if thickened by two gloomy lines of tall houses. It rose slowly and was constantly renewed; hence, a gradual darkening, which

even rendered broad day pallid. The combatants could hardly perceive each other from end to end of the street, although it was very short.

This obscurity, probably desired and calculated upon by the leaders who were to direct the assault upon the barricade, was of use to Gavroche.

Under the folds of this veil of smoke, and, thanks to his small size, he could advance far into the street without being seen. He emptied the first seven or eight cartridge-boxes without much danger.

He crawled on his belly, ran on his hands and feet, took his basket in his teeth, twisted, glided, writhed, wormed his way from one body to another, and emptied a cartridge-box as a monkey opens a nut.

From the barricade, of which he was still within hearing, they dared not call to him to return, for fear of attracting attention to him.

On one corpse, that of a corporal, he found a powder-flask.

"In case of thirst," said he, as he put it into his pocket.

By successive advances he reached a point where the fog from the firing became transparent.

So that the sharpshooters of the line, drawn up and on the alert behind their wall of paving-stones, and the sharpshooters of the banlieue, massed at the corner of the street, suddenly discovered something moving in the smoke.

Just as Gavroche was relieving a sergeant, who lay near a stone block, of his cartridges, a ball struck the body.

"The deuce!" said Gavroche. "So they are killing my dead for me."

A second ball splintered the pavement beside him. A third upset his basket.

Gavroche looked and saw that it came from the banlieue.

He rose up straight on his feet, his hair in the wind, his hands upon his lips, his eye fixed upon the national guards, who were firing, and he sang:

"On est laid à Nanterre,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire,  
Et bête à Palaiseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau."

Then he picked up his basket, put into it the cartridges which had fallen out, without losing a single one, and, advancing toward the fusillade, began to empty another cartridge-box. There a fourth ball just missed him again. Gavroche sang:

“Je ne suis pas notaire;  
C'est la faute à Voltaire;  
Je suis petit oiseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau.”

A fifth ball succeeded only in drawing a third couplet from him:

“Joi est mon caractère,  
C'est la faute à Voltaire;  
Misère est mon trousseau,  
C'est la faute à Rousseau.”

This continued thus for some time.

The sight was appalling and fascinating. Gavroche, fired at, mocked the firing. He appeared to be very much amused. It was the sparrow pecking at the hunters. He replied to each discharge by a couplet. They aimed at him incessantly; they always missed him. The national guards and the soldiers laughed as they aimed at him. He lay down, then rose up, hid himself in a doorway, then sprang out, disappeared, reappeared, escaped, returned, retorted upon the volleys by wry faces, and, meanwhile, pillaged cartridges, emptied cartridge-boxes, and filled his basket. The insurgents, breathless with anxiety, followed him with their eyes. The barricade was trembling; he was singing. It was not a child, it was not a man, it was a strange, fairy *gamin*. One would have said the invulnerable dwarf of the *mêlée*. The bullets ran after him; he was more nimble than they. He was playing an indescribably terrible game of hide-and-seek with death; every time the flat-nose face of the spectre approached the *gamin* snapped his fingers.

One bullet, however, better aimed or more treacherous than the others, reached the will-o'-the-wisp child. They saw Gavroche totter, then he fell. The whole barricade gave a cry, but there was an Antæus in this pigmy; for the *gamin* to touch the pavement is like the giant touching the earth; Gavroche had fallen only to rise again; he sat up, a long stream of blood rolled down his face. he raised



both arms in air, looked in the direction whence the shot came, and began to sing:

“Je suis tombé par terre,  
C’est la faute à Voltaire,  
La nez dans le ruisseau,  
C’est la faute à —”

He did not finish. A second ball from the same marksman cut him short. This time he fell with his face upon the pavement and did not stir again. That little great soul had taken flight.

## XVI

### HOW BROTHER BECOMES FATHER

**T**HERE were at that very moment in the garden of the Luxembourg—for the eye of the drama should be everywhere present—two children holding each other by the hand. One might have been seven years old, the other five. Having been soaked in the rain, they were walking in the paths on the sunny side; the elder was leading the little one; they were pale and in rags: they looked like wild birds. The smaller said: “I want something to eat.”

The elder, already something of a protector, led his brother with his left hand and had a stick in his right hand.

They were alone in the garden. The garden was empty, the gates being closed by order of the police on account of the insurrection. The troops which had bivouacked there had been called away by the necessities of the combat.

How came these children there? Had they haply escaped from some half-open guard-house; was there, perchance, in the neighborhood, at the Barrière d’Enfer, or on the esplanade of the Observatoire, or in the neighboring square overlooked by the pediment on which we read: “*Invenerant parvulum pannis involutum*,” some mountebank’s tent from which they had fled; had they, perchance, the evening before, evaded the eye of the garden-keepers at the hour of closing, and had they passed the night in some one of those boxes in which people read the papers? The fact is, that they were wandering, and that they seemed free. To be wandering and to seem free is to be lost. These poor little ones were lost indeed.

These two children were the very same about whom Gavroche had been in trouble, and whom the reader remembers. Children of the Thenardiers, rented out to Magnon, attributed to M. Gillenormand, and now leaves fallen from all these rootless branches and whirled over the ground by the wind.

Their clothing, neat in Magnon's time, and which served her as a prospectus in the sight of M. Gillenormand, had become tatters.

These creatures belonged henceforth to the statistics of "abandoned children" whom the police report, collect, scatter, and find again on the streets of Paris.

It required the commotion of such a day for these little outcasts to be in this garden. If the officers had noticed them they would have driven away these rags. Poor children can not enter the public gardens; still one would think that, as children, they have a right in the bowers.

These were there, thanks to the closed gates. They were in violation of the rules. They had slipped into the garden and they had stayed there. Closed gates do not dismiss the keepers; the oversight is supposed to continue, but it is relaxed and at its ease; and the keepers, also excited by the public anxiety, and busier with matters without than within, no longer paid attention to the garden, and had not seen the two delinquents.

It had rained the night before, and even a little that morning. But in June showers are of no account. It is with difficulty that we can realize, an hour after a storm, that this fine fair day has been rainy. The ground in summer is as soon dry as the cheek of a child.

At this time of the solstice the light of the full noon is, so to speak, piercing. It seizes upon everything. It applies itself and spreads itself over the earth with a sort of suction. One would say that the sun was thirsty. A shower is a glass of water; a rain is swallowed immediately. In the morning all is streaming; in the afternoon all is dusty.

Nothing is so admirable as a verdure washed by the rain and wiped by the sunbeam; it is warm freshness. The gardens and the meadows, having water at their roots and sunshine in their flowers, become vases of incense and ex-

hale all their perfume at once. All these laugh, sing, and proffer themselves. We feel sweet intoxication. Spring is a provisional paradise; sunshine helps to make man patient.

There are people who ask nothing more; living beings who, having the blue sky, say: "It is enough!" dreamers absorbed in marvel, drawing from idolatry of nature an indifference to good and evil, contemplators of the cosmos radiantly diverted from man, who do not understand how anybody can busy himself with the hunger of these, with the thirst of those, with the nakedness of the poor in winter, with the lymphatic curvature of a little backbone, with the pallet, with the garret, with the dungeon, and with the rags of shivering little girls, when he might dream under the trees; peaceful and terrible souls, pitilessly content. A strange thing, the infinite is enough for them. This great need of man, the finite, which admits of embrace, they ignore. The finite, which admits of progress, sublime toil, they do not think of. The indefinite, which is born of the combination human and divine, of the infinite and the finite, escapes them. Provided they are face to face with immensity they smile. Never joy, always ecstasy. To lose themselves is their life. The history of humanity to them is only a fragmentary plan; All is not there; the true All is still beyond; what is the use of busying ourselves with this incident, man? Man suffers, it is possible; but look at Aldebaran rising yonder! The mother has no milk; the new-born dies; I know nothing about that; but look at this marvelous rosette formed by a transverse section of the sapwood of the fir-tree when examined by the microscope! Compare me that with the most beautiful Mechlin lace! These thinkers forgot to love. The zodiac has such success with them that it prevents them from seeing the weeping child. God eclipses the soul. There is a family of such minds, at once little and great. Horace belonged to it; Goethe belonged to it; La Fontaine, perhaps; magnificent egotists of the infinite, tranquil spectators of grief, who do not see Nero if the weather is fine, from whom the sunshine hides the stake, who would behold the guillotine at work, watching for an effect of light, who **hear** neither the cry nor the sob nor the death-rattle



nor the tocsin, to whom all is well, since there is a month of May, who, so long as there are clouds of purple and gold above their heads, declare themselves content, and who are determined to be happy until the light of the stars and the song of the birds are exhausted.

They are of a dark radiance. They do not suspect that they are to be pitied. Certainly they are. He who does not weep does not see. We should admire and pity them, as we would pity and admire a being at once light and darkness, with no eyes under his brows and a star in the middle of his forehead.

In the indifference of these thinkers, according to some, lies a superior philosophy. So be it. But in this superiority there is some infirmity. One may be immortal and a cripple; Vulcan, for instance. One may be more than man and less than man. The immense incomplete exists in nature. Who knows that the sun is not blind?

But then, what! in whom trust? *Solem quis dicere falsum audeat?* Thus certain geniuses themselves—certain most high mortals, star men—may have been deceived! That which is on high, at the top, at the summit, in the zenith; that which sends over the earth so much light may see little, may see badly, may see nothing! Is not that disheartening? No. But what is there, then, above the sun? The God.

On the 6th of June, 1832, toward eleven o'clock in the morning, the Luxembourg, solitary and unpeopled, was delightful. The quincunxes and the parterres projected themselves into the light in balms and dazzlings. The branches, wild with the noonday brilliance, seemed seeking to embrace each other. There was in the sycamores a chattering of linnets, the sparrows were jubilant, the woodpeckers climbed up the horse-chestnuts, tapping with their beaks the wrinkles in the bark. The flower-beds accepted the legitimate royalty of the lilies; the most august of perfumes is that which comes from whiteness. You inhaled the spicy odor of the pinks. The old rooks of Marie de Medici were amorous in the great trees. The sun gilded, empurpled and kindled the tulips, which are nothing more nor less than all varieties of flame-made flowers. All about the tulip-beds whirled the bees, sparks from these flame-flowers. All was grace and gayety, even the coming rain;

that old offender, by whom the honeysuckles and the lilies of the valley would profit, produced no disquiet; the swallows flew low; charming menace. He who was there breathed happiness; life was sweet; all this nature exhaled candor, help, assistance, paternity, caress, dawn. The thoughts which fell from the sky were as soft as the child's little hand which you kiss.

The statues under the trees, bare and white, had robes of shade torn by light; these goddesses were all tattered by the sunshine; it hung from them in shreds on all sides. Around the great basin the earth was already so dry as to be almost baked. There was wind enough to raise here and there little émeutes of sand. A few yellow leaves, relics of the last autumn, chased one another joyously, and seemed to be playing the *gamin*.

The abundance of light was inexpressibly comforting. Life, sap, warmth, odor, overflowed; you felt beneath creation the enormity of its source! In all these breezes, saturated with love; in this coming and going of reflections and reverberations, in this prodigious expenditure of rays, in this indefinite outlay of fluid gold, you felt the prodigality of the inexhaustible; and behind this splendor, as behind a curtain of flame, you caught a glimpse of God, the millionaire of stars.

Thanks to the sand there was not a trace of mud; thanks to the rain there was not a speck of dust. The bouquets had just been washed; all the velvets, all the satins, all the enamels, all the golds, which spring from the earth in the forms of flowers, were irreproachable. This magnificence was tidy. The great silence of happy nature filled the garden. A celestial silence, compatible with a thousand melodies, cooings of nests, hummings of swarms, palpitations of the wind. All the harmony of the season was accomplished in a graceful whole; the entrances and exits of spring took place in the desired order; the lilacs ended, the jasmines began; some flowers were belated, some insects in advance; the vanguard of the red butterflies of June fraternized with the rearguard of the white butterflies of May.

The plane-trees were getting a new skin. The breeze scooped out waves in the magnificent vastness of the horse-chestnuts. It was resplendent. A veteran of the adjoin-



ing barracks, looking through the grating, said: "There is spring under arms and in full dress."

All nature was breakfasting; creation was at table; it was the hour; the great blue cloth was spread in the sky, and the great green cloth over the earth; the sun shone *à giorno*. God was serving up the universal repast. Every creature had its food or its fodder. The ringdove found hempseed, the chaffinch found millet, the goldfinch found chickweed, the red-breast found worms, the bee found flowers, the fly found infusoria, the grosbeak found flies. They ate one another a little, to be sure, which is the mystery of evil mingled with good; but not an animal had an empty stomach.

The two little abandoned creatures were near the great basin, and, slightly disturbed by all this light, they endeavored to hide, an instinct of the poor and feeble before magnificence, even impersonal, and they kept behind the shelter for the swans.

Here and there, at intervals, when the wind fell, they confusedly heard cries, a hum, a kind of tumultuous rattle, which was musketry, and sullen jars, which were reports of cannon. There was smoke above the roofs in the direction of the markets. A bell, which appeared to be calling, sounded in the distance.

These children did not seem to notice these sounds. The smaller one repeated from time to time in an undertone: "I want something to eat."

Almost at the same moment with the two children, another couple approached the great basin. This was a good man of fifty, who was leading by the hand a good man of six. Doubtless a father with his son. The good man of six had a big bun in his hand.

At that period, certain adjoining houses, in the Rue Madame and the Rue d'Enfer, had keys to the Luxembourg, which occupants used when the gates were closed, a favor since suppressed. This father and this son probably came from one of those houses.

The two poor little fellows saw "this monsieur" coming, and hid themselves a little more closely.

He was a bourgeois. The same, perhaps, whom one day Marius, in spite of his love fever, had heard, near this same great basin, counseling his son "to beware of extremes."



He had an affable and lofty manner, and a mouth which, never closing, was always smiling. This mechanical smile, produced by too much jaw and too little skin, shows the teeth rather than the soul. The child, with his bitten bun, which he did not finish, seemed stuffed. The boy was dressed as a national guard, on account of the émeute, and the father remained in citizen's clothes for the sake of prudence.

The father and son stopped near the basin in which the two swans were sporting. This bourgeois appeared to have a special admiration for the swans. He resembled them in this respect—that he walked like them.

For the moment the swans were swimming, which is their principal talent, and they were superb.

If the two poor little fellows had listened and had been of an age to understand, they might have gathered up the words of a grave man. The father said to the son:

"The sage lives content with little. Behold me, my son. I do not love pomp. Never am I seen with coats bedizened with gold and gems; I leave this false splendor to badly organized minds."

Here the deep sounds, which came from the direction of the markets, broke out with a redoubling of bell and of uproar.

"What is that?" inquired the child.

The father answered:

"They are saturnalia."

Just then he noticed the two little ragged fellows standing motionless behind the green cottage of the swans.

"There is the beginning," said he.

And after a moment he added:

"Anarchy is entering this garden."

Meanwhile the son bit the bun, spit it out, and suddenly began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" asked the father.

"I am not hungry any more," said the child.

The father's smile grew broad.

"You don't need to be hungry to eat a cake."

"I am sick of my cake. It is stale."

"You don't want any more of it?"

"No."

The father showed him the swans.

"Throw it to those palmipeds."

The child hesitated. Not to want any more of one's cake is no reason for giving it away.

The father continued:

"Be humane. We must take pity on the animals."

And taking the cake from his son he threw it into the basin.

The cake fell near the edge.

The swans were at a distance, in the centre of the basin, and busy with some prey. They saw neither the bourgeois nor the bun.

The bourgeois, feeling that the cake was in danger of being lost, and aroused by this useless shipwreck, devoted himself to a telegraphic agitation which finally attracted the attention of the swans.

They perceived something floating, veered about like the ships they are, and directed themselves slowly toward the bun with that serene majesty which is fitting to white animals.

"*Cygnés* [swans] understand *signes* [signs]," said the bourgeois, delighted at his wit.

Just then the distant tumult in the city suddenly increased again. This time it was ominous. There are some gusts of wind which speak more distinctly than others. That which blew at that moment brought clearly the roll of drums, shouts, platoon-firing, and the dismal replies of the tocsin and the cannon. This coincident with a black cloud which abruptly shut out the sun.

The swans had not yet reached the bun.

"Come home," said the father, "they are attacking the Tuileries."

He seized his son's hand again. Then he continued:

"From the Tuileries to the Luxembourg there is only the distance which separates royalty from the peerage: it is not far. It is going to rain musket-balls."

He looked at the cloud.

"And perhaps also the rain itself is going to rain; the heavens are joining in; the younger branch is condemned. Come home, quick."

"I should like to see the swans eat the bun," said the child.

The father answered:

"That would be an imprudence."

And he led away his little bourgeois.

The son, regretting the swans, turned his head toward the basin until a turn in the rows of trees hid it from him.

Meanwhile, at the same time with the swans, the two little wanderers had approached the bun. It was floating on the water. The smaller was looking at the cake, the larger was looking at the bourgeois who was going away.

The father and the son entered the labyrinth of walks which leads to the grand stairway of the cluster of trees on the side toward the Rue Madame.

As soon as they were out of sight the elder quickly lay down with his face over the rounded edge of the basin, and, holding by it with his left hand, hanging over the water, almost falling in, with his right hand reached his stick toward the cake. The swans, seeing their enemy, made haste, and in making haste produced an effect with their breast which was useful to the little fisher; the water flowed back before the swans, and one of those smooth concentric waves pushed the bun gently toward the child's stick. As the swans came up the stick touched the cake. The child made a quick movement, drew in the bun, frightened the swans, seized the cake and got up. The cake was soaked; but they were hungry and thirsty. The eldest broke the bun into two pieces, one large and one small, took the small one for himself, gave the larger one to his little brother and said to him:

"Stick that in your gun."

## XVII

MORTUUS PATER FILIUM MORITURUM EXPECTAT

MARIUS had sprung out of the barricade. Combeferre had followed him. But it was too late. Gavroche was dead. Combeferre brought back the basket of cartridges; Marius brought back the child.

"Alas!" thought he, "what the father had done for his father he was returning to the son; only Thenardier had brought back his father living, while he brought back the child dead."



When Marius re-entered the redoubt with Gavroche in his arms, his face, like the child's, was covered with blood.

Just as he had stooped down to pick up Gavroche a ball grazed his skull; he did not perceive it.

Courfeyrac took off his cravat and bound up Marius' forehead.

They laid Gavroche on the same table with Mabeuf, and they stretched the black shawl over the two bodies. It was large enough for the old man and the child.

Combeferre distributed the cartridges from the basket which he had brought back.

This gave each man fifteen shots.

Jean Valjean was still at the same place, motionless upon his block. When Combeferre presented him his fifteen cartridges he shook his head.

"There is a rare eccentric," said Combeferre in a low tone to Enjolras. "He finds means not to fight in this barricade."

"Which does not prevent him from defending it," answered Enjolras.

"Heroism has its originals," replied Combeferre.

And Courfeyrac, who had overheard, added:

"He is a different kind from Father Mabeuf."

A notable fact, the fire which was battering the barricade hardly disturbed the interior. Those who have never passed through the whirlwind of this kind of war can have no idea of the singular moments of tranquillity which are mingled with these convulsions. Men come and go, they chat, they joke, they lounge. An acquaintance of ours heard a combatant say to him in the midst of the grape: "This is like a bachelor's breakfast." The redoubt in the Rue de la Chanvrerie, we repeat, seemed very calm within. Every turn and every phase of fortune had been or would soon be exhausted. The position, from critical, had become threatening, and from threatening was probably becoming desperate. In proportion as the condition of affairs grew gloomy the heroic gleam empurpled the barricade more and more. Enjolras, grave, commanded it, in the attitude of a young Spartan devoting his drawn sword to the sombre genius Epidotas.

Combeferre, with apron at his waist, was dressing the wounded; Bossuet and Feuilly were making cartridges

with the flask of powder taken by Gavroche from the dead corporal, and Bossuet said to Feuilly: "We shall soon take the diligence for another planet." Courfeyrac, upon the few paving-stones which he had reserved for himself near Enjolras, was disposing and arranging a whole arsenal, his sword-cane, his musket, two horse-pistols, and a pocket pistol, with the care of a girl who is putting a little work-box in order. Jean Valjean was looking in silence at the opposite wall. A workingman was fastening on his head with a string a large straw hat belonging to Mother Hucheloup, "for fear of sunstroke," said he. The young men of the Cougourde d'Aix were chatting gayly with one another, as if they were in a hurry to talk patois for the last time. Joly, who had taken down the widow Hucheloup's mirror, was examining his tongue in it. A few combatants, having discovered some crusts of bread, almost mouldy, in a drawer, were eating them greedily. Marius was anxious about what his father would say to him.

## XVIII

### THE VULTURE BECOMES PREY

**WE** must dwell upon a psychological fact, peculiar to barricades. Nothing which characterizes this surprising war of the streets should be omitted.

Whatever be that strange interior tranquillity of which we have just spoken, the barricade, for those who are within, is none the less a vision.

There is an apocalypse in civil war, all the mists of the unknown are mingled with these savage flames, revolutions are sphinxes, and he who has passed through a barricade believes he has passed through a dream.

What is felt in those places, as we have indicated in reference to Marius, and as we shall see in what follows, is more and is less than life. Once out of the barricade, a man no longer knows what he has seen in it. He was terrible, he does not know it. He was surrounded by combating ideas which had human faces; he had his head in the light of the future. There were corpses lying and phantoms standing. The hours were colossal and seemed hours of eternity. He lived in death. Shadows passed

by. What were they? He saw hands on which there was blood; it was an appalling uproar; it was also a hideous silence; there were open mouths which shouted, and other open mouths which held their peace; he was in the smoke, in the night, perhaps. He thinks he has touched the ominous ooze of the unknown depths; he sees something red in his nails. He remembers nothing more.

Let us return to the Rue de la Chanvrerie.

Suddenly between two discharges they heard the distant sound of a clock striking.

"It is noon," said Combeferre.

The twelve strokes had not sounded when Enjolras sprang to his feet and flung down from the top of the barricade this thundering shout:

"Carry some paving-stones into the house. Fortify the windows with them. Half the men to the muskets, the other half to stones. Not a minute to lose."

A platoon of sappers, their axes on their shoulders, had just appeared in order of battle at the end of the street.

This could only be the head of a column; and of what column? The column of attack, evidently. The sappers, whose duty it is to demolish the barricade, must always precede the soldiers, whose duty it is to scale it.

They were evidently close upon the moment which M. de Clermont Tonnerre, in 1822, called "the twist of the necklace."

Enjolras' order was executed with the correct haste peculiar to ships and barricades, the only places of combat whence escape is impossible. In less than a minute two-thirds of the paving-stones which Enjolras had had piled up at the door of Corinth were carried up to the first story and to the garret; and before a second minute had elapsed these stones, artistically laid one upon the other, walled up half the height of the window on the first story and dormer windows of the attic. A few openings, carefully arranged by Feuilly, chief builder, allowed musket barrels to pass through. This armament of the windows could be performed the more easily since the grape had ceased. The two pieces were now firing balls upon the centre of the wall, in order to make a hole, and, if it were possible, a breach for the assault.

When the paving-stones destined for the last defence



were in position Enjolras had them carry up to the first story the bottles which he had placed under the table where Mabeuf was.

"Who will drink that?" Bossuet asked him.

"They," answered Enjolras.

Then they barricaded the basement window, and they held in readiness the iron cross-pieces which served to bar the door of the wine-shop on the inside at night.

The fortress was complete. The barricade was the rampart, the wine-shop was the donjon.

With the paving-stones which remained they closed up the opening beside the barricade.

As the defenders of a barricade are always obliged to husband their ammunition, and as the besiegers know it, the besiegers perfect their arrangements with a sort of provoking leisure, expose themselves to fire before the time, but in appearance more than in reality, and take their ease. The preparations for attack are always made with a certain methodical slowness; after which, the thunderbolt.

This slowness allowed Enjolras to look over the whole and to perfect the whole. He felt that since such men were to die, their death should be a masterpiece.

He said to Marius: "We are the two chiefs; I will give the last orders within. You stay outside and watch."

Marius posted himself for observation upon the crest of the barricade.

Enjolras had the door of the kitchen, which, we remember, was the hospital, nailed up.

"No spattering on the wounded," said he.

He gave his last instructions in the basement-room in a quick, but deep and calm voice; Feuilly listened, and answered in the name of all.

"First story, hold your axes ready to cut the staircase. Have you them?"

"Yes," said Feuilly.

"How many?"

"Two axes and a pole-axe."

"Very well. There are twenty-six effective men left."

"How many muskets are there?"

"Thirty-four."

"Eight too many. Keep these eight muskets loaded like the rest and at hand. Swords and pistols in your belts.

Twenty men to the barricade. Six in ambush at the dormer windows and at the window on the first story, to fire upon the assailants through the loopholes in the paving-stones. Let there be no useless laborer here. Immediately, when the drum beats the charge, let the twenty from below rush to the barricade. The first there will get the best places."

These dispositions made, he turned toward Javert and said to him:

"I won't forget you."

And, laying a pistol on the table, he added:

"The last man to leave this room will blow out the spy's brains!"

"Here?" inquired a voice.

"No, do not leave this corpse with ours. You can climb over the little barricade on the Rue Mondétour. It is only four feet high. The man is well tied. You will take him there and execute him there."

There was one man, at that moment, who was more impassible than Enjolras; it was Javert.

Here Jean Valjean appeared.

He was in the throng of insurgents. He stepped forward, and said to Enjolras:

"You are the commander?"

"Yes."

"You thanked me just now."

"In the name of the Republic. The barricade has two saviors, Marius Pontmercy and you."

"Do you think that I deserve a reward?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I ask one."

"What?"

"To blow out that man's brains myself."

Javert raised his head, saw Jean Valjean, made an imperceptible movement, and said:

"That is appropriate."

As for Enjolras, he had begun to reload his carbine; he cast his eyes about him:

"No objection."

And turning toward Jean Valjean:

"Take the spy."

Jean Valjean, in fact, took possession of Javert by sit-

ting down on the end of the table. He caught up the pistol, and a slight click announced that he had cocked it.

Almost at the same moment they heard a flourish of trumpets.

"Come on!" cried Marius, from the top of the barricade.

Javert began to laugh with that noiseless laugh which was peculiar to him, and, looking fixedly upon the insurgents, said to them:

"Your health is hardly better than mine."

"All outside!" cried Enjolras.

The insurgents sprang forward in a tumult, and, as they went out, they received in the back, allow us the expression, this speech from Javert:

"Farewell till immediately!"

## XIX

### JEAN VALJEAN TAKES HIS REVENGE

WHEN Jean Valjean was alone with Javert he untied the rope that held the prisoner by the middle of the body, the knot of which was under the table. Then he motioned to him to get up.

Javert obeyed with that undefinable smile into which the supremacy of enchained authority is condensed.

Jean Valjean took Javert by the martingale as you would take a beast of burden by a strap, and, drawing him after him, went out of the wine-shop slowly, for Javert, with his legs fettered, could take only very short steps.

Jean Valjean had the pistol in his hand.

They crossed thus the interior trapezium of the barricade. The insurgents, intent upon the imminent attack, were looking the other way.

Marius, alone, placed toward the left extremity of the wall, saw them pass. This group of the victim and the executioner borrowed a light from the sepulchral gleam which he had in his soul.

Jean Valjean, with some difficulty, bound as Javert was, but without letting go of him for a single instant, made him scale the little intrenchment on the Rue Mondétour.



When they had climbed over this wall they found themselves alone in the little street. Nobody saw them now. The corner of the house hid them from the insurgents. The corpses carried out from the barricades made a terrible mound a few steps off.

They distinguished in the heap of dead a livid face, a flowing head of hair, a wounded hand, and a woman's breast half naked. It was Eponine.

Javert looked aside at this dead body, and, perfectly calm, said in an undertone:

"It seems to me that I know that girl."

Then he turned toward Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean put the pistol under his arm and fixed upon Javert a look which had no need to say: "Javert, it is I."

Javert answered:

"Take your revenge."

Jean Valjean took a knife out of his pocket and opened it.

"*A surin!*" exclaimed Javert. "You are right. That suits you better."

Jean Valjean cut the martingale which Javert had about his neck, then he cut the ropes which he had on his wrists, then, stooping down, he cut the cord which he had on his feet; and, rising, he said to him:

"You are free."

Javert was not easily astonished. Still, complete master as he was of himself, he could not escape an emotion. He stood aghast and motionless.

Jean Valjean continued:

"I don't expect to leave this place. Still, if by chance I should, I live, under the name of Fauchelevent, in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

Javert had the scowl of a tiger half opening a corner of his mouth, and he muttered between his teeth:

"Take care."

"Go," said Jean Valjean.

Javert resumed:

"You said Fauchelevent, Rue de l'Homme Armé?"

"No. 7."

Javert repeated in an undertone: "No. 7." He buttoned his coat, restored the military stiffness between his

shoulders, turned half round, folded his arms, supporting his chin with one hand, and walked off in the direction of the markets. Jean Valjean followed him with his eyes. After a few steps Javert turned back and cried to Jean Valjean:

“You annoy me. Kill me rather.”

Javert did not notice that his tone was more respectful toward Jean Valjean.

“Go away,” said Jean Valjean.

Javert receded with slow steps. A moment afterward he turned the corner of the Rue des Prêcheurs.

When Javert was gone, Jean Valjean fired the pistol in the air.

Then he re-entered the barricade and said:

“It is done.”

Meanwhile what had taken place is this:

Marius, busy rather with the street than the wine-shop, had not until then looked attentively at the spy, who was bound in the dusky rear of the basement-room.

When he saw him in broad day clambering over the barricade on his way to die he recognized him. A sudden reminiscence came into his mind. He remembered the inspector of the Rue de Pontoise and the two pistols which he had handed him and which he had used, he, Marius, in this very barricade; and not only did he recollect the face, but he recalled the name.

This reminiscence, however, was misty and indistinct, like all his ideas. It was not an affirmation which he made to himself, it was a question which he put: “Is not this that inspector of police who told me his name was Javert?”

Perhaps there was still time to interfere for this man. But he must first know if it were indeed that Javert.

Marius called to Enjolras, who had just taken his place at the other end of the barricade:

“Enjolras!”

“What?”

“What is that man’s name?”

“Who?”

“The police officer. Do you know his name?”

“Of course. He told us.”

“What is his name?”

“Javert.”

Marius sprang up.

At that moment they heard the pistol-shot.

Jean Valjean reappeared and cried: "It is done."

A dreary chill passed through the heart of Marius.

## XX

THE DEAD ARE RIGHT AND THE LIVING ARE NOT WRONG

**T**HE death agony of the barricade was approaching.

All things concurred in the tragic majesty of this supreme moment; a thousand mysterious disturbances in the air, the breath of armed masses set in motion in streets which they could not see, the intermittent gallop of cavalry, the heavy concussion of artillery on the march, the platoon firing and the cannonades crossing each other in the labyrinth of Paris, the smoke of the battle rising all golden above the roofs, mysterious cries, distant, vaguely terrible flashes of menace everywhere, the tocsin of St. Merry which now had the sound of a sob, the softness of the season, the splendor of the sky full of sunshine and of clouds, the beauty of the day, and the appalling silence of the houses.

For since evening the two rows of houses in the Rue de la Chanvrerie had become two walls; savage walls. Doors closed, windows closed, shutters closed.

In those days, so different from these in which we live, when the hour had come in which the people wished to make an end of a state of affairs which had lasted too long, of a granted charter or of a constitutional country, when the universal anger was diffused in the atmosphere, when the city consented to the upheaval of its pavements, when insurrection made the bourgeoisie smile by whispering its watchword in its ear, then the inhabitant filled with émeute, so to speak, was the auxiliary of the combatant, and the house fraternized with the impromptu fortress which leaned upon it. When the condition of affairs was not ripe, when the insurrection was not decidedly acceptable, when the mass disavowed the movement, it was all over with the combatants, the city changed into a desert about the revolt, souls were chilled, asylums were walled up, and the street became a defile to aid the army in taking the barricade.



A people can not be surprised into a more rapid progress than it wills. Woe to him who attempts to force its hand. A people does not allow itself to be used. Then it abandons the insurrection to itself. The insurgents become pestiferous. A house is an escarpment, a door is a refusal, a façade is a wall. This wall sees, hears, and will not. It might open and save you. No. This wall is a judge. It looks upon you and condemns you. How gloomy are these closed houses! They seem dead, they are living. Life, which is, as it were, suspended in them, still exists. Nobody has come out of them for twenty-four hours, but nobody is missing. In the interior of this rock people go and come, they lie down, they get up; they are at home there; they drink and they eat; they are afraid there; a fearful thing! Fear excuses this terrible inhospitality; it tempers it with timidity, a mitigating circumstance. Sometimes, even, and this has been seen, fear becomes passion; fright may change into fury, as prudence into rage; hence this saying so profound: "The madmen of moderation." There are flamings of supreme dismay from which rage springs like a dismal smoke. "What do these people want? They are never contented. They compromise peaceable men. As if we had not had revolutions enough like this! What do they come here for? Let them get out of it themselves. So much the worse for them. It is their own fault. They have only got what they deserve. It doesn't concern us. Here is our poor street riddled with balls. They are a parcel of scamps. Above all, don't open the door." And the house puts on the semblance of a tomb. The insurgent before that door is in his last agony; he sees the grape and the drawn sabres coming; if he calls he knows that they hear him, but that they will not come; there are walls which might protect him, there are men who might save him; and those walls have ears of flesh, and those men have bowels of stone.

Whom shall he accuse?

Nobody and everybody.

The imperfect age in which we live.

It is always at her own risk and peril that Utopia transforms herself into insurrection, and from a philosophic protest becomes an armed protest, from Minerva, Pallas. The Utopia which grows impatient and becomes émeute

knows what awaits her; almost always she is too soon. Then she resigns herself and stoically accepts, instead of triumph, catastrophe. She serves, without complaining, and exonerating them even, those who deny her, and it is her magnanimity to consent to abandonment. She is indomitable against hindrance and gentle toward ingratitude.

But is it ingratitude?

Yes, from the point of view of the race.

No, from the point of view of the individual.

Progress is the mode of man. The general life of the human race is called progress. The collective advance of the human race is called progress. Progress marches; it makes the great human and terrestrial journey toward the celestial and the divine; it has its halts where it rallies the belated flock; it has its stations where it meditates, in sight of some splendid Canaan suddenly unveiling its horizon; it has its nights when it sleeps; and it is one of the bitter anxieties of the thinker to see the shadow upon the human soul, and to feel in the darkness progress asleep, without being able to waken it.

"God is dead, perhaps," said Gerard de Nerval one day to him who writes these lines, confounding progress with God, and mistaking the interruption of the movement for the death of the being.

He who despairs is wrong. Progress infallibly awakens, and, in short, we might say that it advances even in sleep, for it has grown. When we see it standing again we find it taller. To be always peaceful belongs to progress no more than to the river; raise no obstruction, cast in no rock; the obstacle makes water foam and humanity seethe. Hence troubles; but after these troubles we recognize that there has been some ground gained. Until order, which is nothing more nor less than universal peace, be established, until harmony and unity reign, progress will have revolutions for stations.

What, then, is progress? We have just said: "The permanent life of the peoples."

Now, it sometimes happens that the momentary life of individuals offers resistance to the eternal life of the human race.

Let us acknowledge it without bitterness, the individual

has his distinct interest, and may without offence set up that interest and defend it; the present has its excusable quantum of selfishness; the life of the moment has its rights, and is not bound to sacrifice itself continually to the future. The generation which has now its turn of passing over the earth is not compelled to abridge it for the generations, its equals after all, which are to have their turn afterward. "I exist," murmurs that somebody whose name is All. "I am young and I am in love, I am old and I want to rest, I am the father of a family, I am working, I am prospering, I am doing a good business, I have houses to rent, I have money in the government, I am happy, I have a wife and children, I love all this, I desire to live, let me alone." Hence, at certain periods, a deep chill upon the magnanimous vanguard of the human race.

Utopia, moreover, we must admit, departs from its radiant sphere in making war. The truth of to-morrow, she borrows her process, battle, from the lie of yesterday. She, the future, acts like the past. She, the pure idea, becomes an act of force. She compromises her heroism by a violence for which it is just that she should answer; a violence of opportunity and of expediency, contrary to principles, and for which she is fatally punished. Utopia insurrection fights; the old military code in her hand; she shoots spies, she executes traitors, she suppresses living beings and casts them into the unknown dark. She uses death, a solemn thing. It seems as though Utopia had lost faith in the radiation of light, her irresistible and incorruptible strength. She strikes with the sword. Now, no sword is simple. Every blade has two edges; he who wounds with one wounds himself with the other.

This reservation made, and made in all severity, it is impossible for us not to admire, whether they succeed or not, the glorious combatants of the future, the professors of Utopia. Even when they fail they are venerable, and it is, perhaps, in failure that they have the greater majesty. Victory, when it is according to progress, deserves the applause of the peoples; but a heroic defeat deserves their compassion. One is magnificent, the other is sublime. For ourselves, who prefer martyrdom to success, John Brown is greater than Washington, and Pisacane is greater than Garibaldi.



Surely some must be on the side of the vanquished.

Men are unjust toward these great essayists of the future when they fail.

The revolutionists are accused of striking terror. Every barricade seems an outrage. Their theories are incriminated, their aim is suspected, their afterthought is dreaded, their conscience is denounced. They are reproached with raising, building and heaping up against the reigning social state a mound of miseries, of sorrows, of iniquities, of griefs, of despairs, and with tearing up blocks of darkness from the lower depths with which to intrench themselves and to fight. Men cry to them: "You are unpaving hell!" They might answer: "That is why our barricade is made of good intentions."

The best, certainly, is the peaceable solution. On the whole, let us admit, when we see the pavement, we think of the bear, and his is a willingness about which society is not at ease. But the salvation of society depends upon itself; to its own willingness we appeal. No violent remedy is necessary. Study evil lovingly, determine it, then cure it. To that we urge.

However this may be, even when fallen, especially when fallen, august are they who, upon all points of the world, with eyes fixed on France, struggle for the great work with the inflexible logic of the ideal; they give their life a pure gift for progress; they accomplish the will of Providence; they perform a religious act. At the appointed hour, with as much disinterestedness as an actor who reaches his cue, obedient to the divine scenario, they enter into the tomb. And this hopeless combat, and this stoical disappearance, they accept to lead to its splendid and supreme universal consequences the magnificent movement of man, irresistibly commenced on the 14th of July, 1789; these soldiers are priests. The French Revolution is an act of God.

Still, there are (and it is proper to add this distinction to the distinctions already indicated in another chapter) accepted insurrections which are called revolutions; there are rejected revolutions which are called *émeutes*. An insurrection breaking out is an idea passing its examination before the people. If the people drops its black ball the idea is withered fruit; the insurrection is an affray.

To go to war upon every summons and whenever Utopia desires it is not the part of the peoples. The nations have not always and at every hour the temperament of heroes and of martyrs.

They are positive. *A priori*, insurrection repels them; first, because it often results in disaster; second, because it always has an abstraction for its point of departure.

For, and this is beautiful, it is always for the ideal, and for the ideal alone, that those devote themselves who do devote themselves. An insurrection is an enthusiasm. Enthusiasm may work itself into anger; hence the resort to arms. But every insurrection which is directed against a government or régime aims still higher. Thus, for instance, let us repeat what the chiefs of the insurrection of 1832, and in particular the young enthusiasts of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, fought against was not exactly Louis Philippe. Most of them, speaking frankly, rendered justice to the qualities of this king midway between the monarchy and the revolution; none hated him. But they attacked the younger branch of divine right in Louis Philippe as they had attacked the elder branch in Charles X; and what they desired to overthrow in overthrowing royalty in France, as we have explained, was the usurpation of man over man and of privilege over right in the whole world. Paris without a king has, as a consequence, the world without despots. They reasoned in this way. Their aim was distant, doubtless, vague, perhaps, and receding before effort, but great.

Thus it is. And men sacrifice themselves for these visions, which, to the sacrificed, are illusions almost always, but illusions with which, upon the whole, all human certainty is mingled. The insurgent poetizes and gilds the insurrection. He throws himself into these tragic things, intoxicated with what he is going to do. Who knows? they will succeed, perhaps. They are but few; they have against them a whole army; but they defend right, natural law, that sovereignty of each over himself of which there is no abdication possible, justice, truth, and in case of need they die like the three hundred Spartans. They think not of Don Quixote, but of Leonidas. And they go forward, and, once engaged, they do not recoil, and they hurl themselves headlong, hoping for unparalleled victory,

revolution completed, progress set at liberty, the aggrandizement of the human race, universal deliverance; and seeing at the worst a Thermopylæ.

These passages at arms for progress often fail; why, we have just told. The throng is restive under the sway of the paladins. The heavy masses, the multitudes, fragile on account of their very weight, dread uncertainties; and there is uncertainty in the ideal.

Moreover, let it not be forgotten, interests are there, little friendly to the ideal and the emotional. Sometimes the stomach paralyzes the heart.

The grandeur and the beauty of France are that she cares less for the belly than other peoples; she knots the rope about her loins more easily. She is first awake, last asleep. She goes in advance. She is a pioneer.

That is because she is an artist.

The ideal is nothing more nor less than the culminating point of logic, even as the beautiful is nothing more nor less than the summit of the true. The artist people is thus the consistent people. To love beauty is to see light. This is why the torch of Europe, that is to say, civilization, was first borne by Greece, who passed it to Italy, who passed it to France. Divine pioneer peoples! *Vitai lam-pada tradunt!*

An admirable thing, the poetry of a people is the element of its progress. The amount of civilization is measured by the amount of imagination. Only a civilizing people must remain a manly people. Corinth, yes; Sybaris, no. He who becomes effeminate becomes corrupt. We must be neither dilettanti nor virtuosi; but we must be artists. In the matter of civilization, we must not refine, but we must sublime. On this condition we give the human race the pattern of the ideal.

The modern ideal has its type in art and its means in science. It is through science that we shall realize that august vision of the poets—social beauty. We shall reproduce Eden by  $A + B$ . At the point which civilization has reached, the exact is a necessary element of the splendid, and the artistic sentiment is not merely served, but completed by the scientific organ; dream must calculate. Art, which is the conqueror, must have its fulcrum in science, which is the mover. The solidity of the mounting is im-



portant. The modern spirit is the genius of Greece with the genius of India for its vehicle; Alexander upon the elephant.

Races petrified in dogma or demoralized by lucre are unfit to lead civilization. Genuflection before the idol or the dollar atrophies the muscle which walks and the will which goes. Hieratic or mercantile absorption diminishes the radiance of a people, lowers its horizon by lowering its level, and deprives it of that intelligence of the universal aim, at the same time human and divine, which makes the missionary nations. Babylon has no ideal; Carthage has no ideal. Athens and Rome have and preserve, even through all the thick night of centuries, halos of civilization.

France is of the same quality of people as Greece and Italy. She is Athenian by the beautiful and Roman by the great. In addition she is good. She gives herself. She is oftener than other peoples in the spirit of devotion and sacrifice. Only this spirit takes her and leaves her. And here lies the great peril for those who run when she wishes to walk, or who walk when she wishes to stop. France has her relapses of materialism, and, at certain moments, the ideas which obstruct that sublime brain lose all that recalls French greatness, and are of the dimensions of a Missouri or of a South Carolina. What is to be done? The giantess is playing the dwarf; immense France has her childish whims. That is all.

To this nothing can be said. A people, like a star, has the right of eclipse. And all is well, provided the light returns and the eclipse does not degenerate into night. Dawn and resurrection are synonyms. The reappearance of the light is identical with the persistence of the Me.

Let us lay down these things with calmness. Death on the barricade, or a grave in exile, is an acceptable alternative for devotion. The true name of devotion is disinterestedness. Let the abandoned submit to abandonment, let the exiles submit to exile, and let us content ourselves with imploring the great peoples not to recede too far when they do recede. They must not, under pretext of a return to reason, go too far in the descent.

Matter is, the moment is, interest is, the belly is; but the belly must not be the only wisdom. The momentary

life has its rights, we admit, but the permanent life has its also. Alas! to have risen does not prevent falling. We see this in history oftener than we would wish. A nation is illustrious; it tastes the ideal; then it bites the filth and finds it good; and if we ask why it abandons Socrates for Falstaff, it answers: "Because I love statesmen."

A word more before returning to the conflict.

A battle like this which we are now describing is nothing but a convulsive movement toward the ideal. Enfettered progress is sickly and it has these tragic epilepsies. This disease of progress, civil war, we have had to encounter upon our passage. It is one of the fatal phases, at once act and interlude, of this drama, the pivot of which is a social outcast and the true title of which is progress.

Progress!

This cry which we often raise is our whole thought; and, at the present point of this drama, the idea that it contains having still more than one ordeal to undergo, it is permitted us, perhaps, if not to lift the veil from it, at least to let the light shine clearly through.

The book which the reader has now before his eyes is, from one end to the other, in its whole and in its details, whatever may be the intermissions, the exceptions, or the defaults, the march from evil to good, from injustice to appetite to conscience, from rottenness to life, from justice, from the false to the true, from night to day, from brutality to duty, from hell to heaven, from nothingness to God. Starting point, matter; goal, the soul. Hydra at the beginning, angel at the end.

## XXI

### THE HEROES

**S**UDDENLY the drum beat the charge.

The attack was a hurricane. In the evening, in the obscurity, the barricade had been approached silently as if by a boa. Now, in broad day, in this open street, surprise was entirely impossible; the strong hand, moreover, was unmasked, the cannon had commenced the roar, the army rushed upon the barricade. Fury was now skill. A powerful column of infantry of the line, intersected at equal

intervals by national guards and municipal guards on foot, and supported by deep masses, heard but unseen, turned into the street at a quick-step, drums beating, trumpets sounding, bayonets fixed, sappers at their head, and, unswerving under the projectiles, came straight upon the barricade with the weight of a bronze column upon a wall.

The wall held well.

The insurgents fired impetuously. The barricade scaled was like a mane of flashes. The assault was so sudden that for a moment it was overflowed by assailants; but it shook off the soldiers as the lion does the dogs, and it was covered with besiegers only as the cliff is with foam, to reappear, a moment afterward, steep, black, and formidable.

The column, compelled to fall back, remained massed in the street, unsheltered, but terrible, and replied to the redoubt by a fearful fusillade. Whoever has seen fireworks remembers that sheaf made by a crossing of flashes which is called the bouquet. Imagine this bouquet, not now vertical, but horizontal, bearing a ball, a buckshot, or a bullet, at the point of each of its jets of fire, and scattering death in its clusters of thunder. The barricade was beneath it.

On both sides equal resolution. Bravery there was almost barbaric, and was mingled with a sort of heroic ferocity which began with the sacrifice of itself. Those were the days when a national guard fought like a zouave. The troops desired to make an end of it; the insurrection desired to struggle. The acceptance of death in full youth and in full health makes a frenzy of intrepidity. Every man in this mêlée felt the aggrandizement given by the supreme hour. The street was covered with dead.

Enjolras was at one of the barricades and Marius at the other. Enjolras, who carried the whole barricade in his head, reserved and sheltered himself; three soldiers fell one after the other under his battlement, without even having perceived him; Marius fought without shelter. He took no aim. He stood with more than half his body above the summit of the redoubt. There is no wilder prodigal than a miser who takes the bit in his teeth; there is no man more fearful in action than a dreamer. Marius was terrible and pensive. He was in the battle as in a dream. One would have said a phantom firing a musket.

The cartridges of the besieged were becoming exhausted;



not so their sarcasms. In this whirlwind of the sepulchre in which they were they laughed.

Courfeyrac was bareheaded.

"What have you done with your hat?" inquired Bossuet.

Courfeyrac answered:

"They have knocked it off, at last, by their cannonade."

Or, indeed, they said haughty things.

"Does anybody understand these men," exclaimed Feuilly bitterly (and he cited the names, well known names, famous even, some of the old army), "who promised to join us, and took an oath to help us, and who were bound to it in honor, and who are our generals, and who abandon us?"

And Combeferre simply answered with a grave smile:

"There are people who observe the rules of honor as we observe the stars, from afar off."

The interior of the barricade was so strewn with torn cartridges that one would have said it had been snowing.

The assailants had the numbers; the insurgents the position. They were on the top of a wall and they shot down the soldiers at the muzzles of their muskets, as they stumbled over the dead and wounded and became entangled in the escarpment. This barricade, built as it was, and admirably supported, was really one of those positions in which a handful of men hold a legion in check. Still, constantly reinforced and increasing under the shower of balls, the attacking column inexorably approached, and now, little by little, step by step, but with certainty, the army hugged the barricade as the screw hugs the winepress. There was assault after assault. The horror continued to increase.

Then resounded over this pile of paving-stones, in this Rue de la Chanvrière, a struggle worthy the walls of Troy. These men, wan, tattered, and exhausted, who had not eaten for twenty-four hours, who had not slept, who had but few more shots to fire, who felt their pockets empty of cartridges, nearly all wounded, their heads or arms bound with a smutty and blackened cloth, with holes in their coats whence the blood was flowing, scarcely armed with worthless muskets and with old hacked swords, became Titans. The barricade was ten times approached, assaulted, scaled, and never taken.

To form an idea of this struggle, imagine fire applied to a mass of terrible valor, and that you are witnessing the conflagration. It was not a combat, it was the interior of a furnace; there mouths breathed flame; there faces were wonderful. There the human form seemed impossible, the combatants flashed flames, and it was terrible to see going and coming in that lurid smoke these salamanders of the fray. The successive and simultaneous scenes of this grand slaughter we decline to paint. The epic alone has a right to fill 12,000 lines with one battle.

One would have said it was that hell of Brahminism, the most formidable of the seventeen abysses, which the Veda calls the Forest of Swords.

They fought breast to breast, foot to foot, with pistols, with sabres, with fists, at a distance, close at hand, from above, from below, from everywhere, from the roof of the house, from the windows of the wine-shop, from the gratings of the cellars into which some had slipped. They were one against sixty. The façade of Corinth, half demolished, was hideous. The window, riddled with grape, had lost glass and sash, and was now nothing but a shapeless hole, confusedly blocked with paving-stones. Bossuet was killed; Feuilly was killed; Courfeyrac was killed; Joly was killed; Combeferre, pierced by three bayonet thrusts in the breast, just as he was lifting a wounded soldier, had only time to look to heaven and expired.

Marius, still fighting, was so hacked up with wounds, particularly about the head, that his countenance was lost in blood, and you would have said that he had his face covered with a red handkerchief.

Enjolras alone was untouched. When his weapon failed he reached his hand to right or left, and an insurgent put whatever weapon he could in his grasp. Of four swords, one more than Francis I at Marignan, he now had but one stump remaining.

Homer says: "Diomed slays Axylus, son of Teuthras, who dwelt in happy Arisbe; Euryaius, son of Mecisteus, exterminates Dresos and Opheltics, Aesepus, and that Pedasus whom the Naiad Abarbarea conceived by the irreproachable Bucolion; Ulysses overthrows Pidutes of Percete; Antilochus, Ablerus; Polypætès, Astyalus; Polydamas, Otus of Cyllene, and Teucer, Aretaon. Maganthius

dies beneath the spear of Euripylus. Agamemnon, king of heroes, prostrates Elatus, born in the lofty city which the sounding Satnio laves." In our old poems of exploits Esplandian attacks the giant Marquis Swantibore with a two-edged flame, while he defends himself by stoning the knight with the towers which he tears up. Our ancient mural frescoes show us the two dukes of Brittany and of Bourbon, armed, mailed, and crested for war, on horseback, and meeting each other, battle-axe in hand, masked with iron, booted with iron, gloved with iron, one caparisoned with ermine, the other draped with azure; Brittany, with his lion between the two horns of his crown, Bourbon, with a monstrous *fleur-de-lis* on the vizor of his casque. But, to be superb, it is not necessary to bear, like Yvon, the ducal morion; to handle, like Esplandian, a living flame, or like Phyles, father of Polydamas, to have brought from Ephyræ a fine armor, a present from the king of men, Euphetes; it is enough to give life for a conviction or for a loyalty. That little artless soldier, yesterday a peasant of Beauce or Limousin, who prowls, cabbage-knife at his side, about the children's nurses in the Luxembourg; that pale young student, bending over a piece of anatomy or a book; a fair-haired youth who trims his beard with scissors; take them both, breathe upon them a breath of duty, place them opposite each other in the Boucherat square or in the Cul-de-sac Blanche Mibray, and let the one fight for the flag and the other for his ideal, and let them both imagine that they are fighting for the country; the strife will be colossal; and the shadow which will be thrown upon that great epic field where humanity is struggling, by this blue-coat and this saw-bones in quarrel, will equal the shadow which is cast by Megaryon, King of Lycia, full of tigers, wrestling body to body with the immense Ajax, equal of the gods.

## XXII

## FOOT TO FOOT

WHEN there were none of the chiefs alive save Enjolras and Marius, who were at the extremities of the barricade, the centre, which Courfeyrac, Joly, Bossuet, Feuilly, and Combeferre had so long sustained, gave way.



The artillery, without making a practicable breach, had deeply indented the centre of the redoubt; there, the summit of the wall had disappeared under the balls and had tumbled down; and the rubbish which had fallen, sometimes on the interior, sometimes on the exterior, had finally made, as it was heaped up on either side of the wall, a kind of talus, both on the inside and on the outside. The exterior talus offered an inclined plane for attack.

A final assault was now attempted, and this assault succeeded. The mass, bristling with bayonets and hurled at a double-quick step, came on irresistibly, and the dense battle-front of the attacking column appeared in the smoke at the top of the escarpment. This time it was finished. The group of insurgents who defended the centre fell back pell-mell.

Then grim love of life was roused in some. Covered by the aim of that forest of muskets, several were now unwilling to die. This is a moment when the instinct of self-preservation raises a howl and the animal reappears in the man. They were pushed back to the high six-story house which formed the rear of the redoubt. This house might be safety. This house was barricaded, and, as it were, walled in from top to bottom. Before the troops of the line would be in the interior of the redoubt there was time for a door to open and shut; a flash was enough for that, and the door of this house, suddenly half-opened and closed again immediately, to these despairing men was life. In the rear of this house there were streets, possible flight, space. They began to strike this door with the butts of their muskets and with kicks, calling, shouting, begging, wringing their hands. Nobody opened. From the window on the third story the death's-head looked at them.

But Enjolras and Marius, with seven or eight who had been rallied about them, sprang forward and protected them. Enjolras cried to the soldiers: "Keep back!" and an officer, not obeying, Enjolras killed the officer. He was now in the little interior court of the redoubt, with his back to the house of Corinth, his sword in one hand, his carbine in the other, keeping the door of the wine-shop open while he barred it against the assailants. He cried to the despairing: "There is but one door open—this one." And, covering them with his body, alone facing a battalion, he made

them pass in behind him. All rushed in. Enjolras, executing with his carbine, which he now used as a cane, what cudgel-players call *la rose couverte*, beat down the bayonets about him and before him, and entered last of all; and for an instant it was horrible—the soldiers struggling to get in, the insurgents to close the door. The door was closed with such violence that, in shutting into its frame, it exposed, cut off, and adhering to the casement, the thumb and fingers of a soldier who had caught hold of it.

Marius remained without. A ball had broken his shoulder-blade; he felt that he was fainting and that he was falling. At that moment, his eyes already closed, he experienced the shock of a vigorous hand seizing him, and his fainting fit, in which he lost consciousness, left him hardly time for this thought, mingled with the last memory of Cosette: "I am taken prisoner; I shall be shot!"

Enjolras, not seeing Marius among those who had taken refuge in the wine-shop, had the same idea. But they had reached that moment when each has only time to think of his own death. Enjolras fixed the bar of the door and bolted it, and fastened it with a double turn of lock and padlock, while they were beating furiously on the outside, the soldiers with the butts of their muskets, the sappers with their axes. The assailants were massed upon this door. The siege of the wine-shop was now beginning.

The soldiers, we must say, were greatly irritated.

The death of the sergeant of artillery had angered them, and then, a more deadly thing, during the few hours which preceded the attack, it had been told among them that the insurgents mutilated prisoners, and that there was in the wine-shop the body of a soldier headless. This sort of unfortunate rumor is the ordinary accompaniment of civil wars; and it was a false report of this kind which, at a later day, caused the catastrophe of the Rue Transnonain.

When the door was barricaded Enjolras said to the remaining:

"Let us sell ourselves dearly."

Then he approached the table upon which Mabeuf and Gavroche were extended. Two straight and rigid forms could be seen under the black cloth, one large, the other small; and the two faces were vaguely outlined beneath the stiff folds of the shroud. A hand projected from below

the pall and hung toward the floor. It was the old man's.

Enjolras bent down and kissed that venerable hand, as in the evening he had kissed the forehead.

They were the only kisses which he had given in his life.

We must be brief. The barricade had struggled like a gate of Thebes; the wine-shop struggled like a house of Saragossa. Such resistances are dogged. No quarter. No parley possible. They are willing to die, provided they kill. When Suchet says: "Capitulate," Palafox answers: "After the war with cannon, war with the knife." Nothing was wanting to the storming of the Hucheloup wine-shop; neither the paving-stones raining from the window and the roof upon the besiegers, and exasperating the soldiers by their horrible mangling, nor the shots from the cellars and the garret windows, nor fury of attack, nor rage of defence; nor, finally, when the door yielded, the frenzied madness of the extermination. The assailants, on rushing into the wine-shop, their feet entangled in the panels of the door, which were beaten in and scattered over the floor, found no combatant there. The spiral stairway, which had been cut down with the axe, lay in the middle of the basement-room, a few wounded had just expired, all who were not killed were in the first story, and there, through the hole in the ceiling, which had been the entrance for the stairway, a terrific firing broke out. It was the last of the cartridges. When they were gone, when these terrible men, in their death agony, had no longer either powder or ball, each took two of those bottles reserved by Enjolras, of which we have spoken, and they defended the ascent with those frightfully fragile clubs. They were bottles of aqua-fortis.

We describe these gloomy facts of the carnage as they are. The besieged, alas! make a weapon of everything. Greek fire did not dishonor Archimedes, boiling pitch did not dishonor Bayard. All war is appalling, and there is nothing to choose in it. The fire of the besiegers, although difficult and from below upward, was murderous. The edge of the hole in the ceiling was very soon surrounded with the heads of the dead, from which flowed long red and reeking lines. The uproar was inexpressible; a stifled and burning smoke made night almost over this



combat. Words fail to express horror when it reaches this degree. There were men no longer in this now infernal conflict. They were no longer giants against colossi. It resembled Milton and Dante rather than Homer. Demons attacked, spectres resisted.

It was the heroism of monsters.

### XXIII

#### ORESTES FASTING AND PYLADES DRUNK

AT last, mounting on each other's shoulders, helping themselves by the skeleton of the staircase, climbing up the walls, hanging to the ceiling, cutting to pieces, at the very edge of the hatchway, the last to resist, some twenty of the besiegers, soldiers, national guards, municipal guards, pell-mell, most disfigured by wounds in the face in this terrible ascent, blinded with blood, furious, become savages, made an irruption into the room of the first story. There was now but a single man there on his feet, Enjolras. Without cartridges, without a sword, he had now in his hand only the barrel of his carbine, the stock of which he had broken over the heads of those who were entering. He had put the billiard-table between the assailants and himself; he had retreated to the corner of the room, and there, with proud eye, haughty head, and that stump of a weapon in his grasp, he was still so formidable that a large space was left about him. A cry arose:

"This is the chief. It is he who killed the artilleryman. As he has put himself there it is a good place. Let him stay. Let us shoot him on the spot."

"Shoot me," said Enjolras.

And, throwing away the stump of his carbine and folding his arms, he presented his breast.

The boldness that dies well always moves men. As soon as Enjolras had folded his arms, accepting the end, the uproar of the conflict ceased in the room and that chaos suddenly hushed into a sort of sepulchral solemnity. It seemed as if the menacing majesty of Enjolras, disarmed and motionless, weighed upon that tumult, and as if, merely by the authority of his tranquil eye, this young man, who alone had no wound, superb, bloody, fascinating, indiffer-

ent, as if he were invulnerable, compelled that sinister mob to kill him respectfully. His beauty, at that moment augmented by his dignity, was a resplendence, and, as if he could no more be fatigued than wounded, after the terrible twenty-four hours which had just elapsed, he was fresh and rosy. It was of him, perhaps, that the witness spoke who said afterward before the court-martial: "There was one insurgent whom I heard called Apollo." A national guard, who was aiming at Enjolras, dropped his weapon, saying: "It seems to me that I am shooting a flower."

Twelve men formed in platoon in the corner opposite Enjolras and made their muskets ready in silence.

Then a sergeant cried: "Take aim!"

An officer intervened.

"Wait."

And addressing Enjolras:

"Do you wish your eyes bandaged?"

"No."

"Was it really you that killed the sergeant of artillery?"

"Yes."

Within a few seconds Grantaire had awakened.

Grantaire, it will be remembered, had been asleep since the day previous in the upper room of the wine-shop, sitting in a chair, leaning heavily forward on a table.

He realized, in all its energy, the old metaphor, dead drunk. The hideous potion, absinth-stout-alcohol, had thrown him into a lethargy. His table being small and of no use in the barricade, they had left it to him. He had continued in the same posture, his breast doubled over the table, his head lying flat upon his arms, surrounded by glasses, jugs, and bottles. He slept with that crushing sleep of the torpid bear and the overfed leech. Nothing had affected him, neither the musketry, nor the balls, nor the grape which penetrated through the casement into the room in which he was. Nor the prodigious uproar of the assault. Only he responded sometimes to the cannon with a snore. He seemed waiting there for a ball to come and save him the trouble of awaking. Several corpses lay about him; and, at the first glance, nothing distinguished him from those deep sleepers of death.

Noise does not awaken a drunkard; silence wakens him. This peculiarity has been observed more than once. The

fall of everything about him augmented Grantaire's oblivion; destruction was a lullaby to him. The kind of halt in the tumult before Enjolras was a shock to this heavy sleep. It was the effect of a wagon at a gallop stopping short. The sleepers are roused by it. Grantaire rose up with a start, stretched his arms, rubbed his eyes, looked, gaped, and understood.

Drunkenness ending is like a curtain torn away. We see altogether and at a single glance all that is concealed. Everything is suddenly presented to the memory; and the drunkard who knows nothing of what has taken place for twenty-four hours has no sooner opened his eyes than he is aware of all that has passed. His ideas come back to him with an abrupt lucidity; the effacement of drunkenness, a sort of lye-wash which blinds the brain, dissipates and gives place to clear and precise impressions of the reality.

Retired as he was in a corner, and, as it were, sheltered behind the billiard-table, the soldiers, their eyes fixed upon Enjolras, had not even noticed Grantaire, and the sergeant was preparing to repeat the order: "Take aim!" when suddenly they heard a powerful voice cry out beside them:

*"Vive la République! I belong to it."*

Grantaire had arisen.

The immense glare of the whole combat which he had missed and in which he had not been, appeared in the flashing eyes of the transfigured drunkard.

He repeated, *"Vive la République!"* crossed the room with a firm step and took his place before the muskets beside Enjolras.

"Two at one shot," said he.

And, turning toward Enjolras gently, he said to him:

"Will you permit it?"

Enjolras grasped his hand with a smile.

This smile was not finished when the report was heard.

Enjolras, pierced by eight balls, remained backed against the wall as if the balls had nailed him there. Only he bowed his head.

Grantaire, stricken down, fell at his feet.

A few moments afterward the soldiers dislodged the last insurgents who had taken refuge in the top of the house. They fired through a wooden lattice into the garret. They



fought in the attics. They threw the bodies out of the windows, some living. Two voltigeurs, who were trying to raise the shattered omnibus, were killed by two shots from a carbine fired from the dormer windows. A man in a blouse was pitched out headlong with a bayonet thrust in his belly, and his death-rattle was finished upon the ground. A soldier and an insurgent slipped together on the slope of the tiled roof, and would not let go of each other, and fell, clasped in a wild embrace. Similar struggle in the cellar. Cries, shots, savage stamping. Then silence. The barricade was taken.

The soldiers commenced the search of the houses round about and the pursuit of the fugitives.

## XXIV

### PRISONER

**M**ARIUS was, in fact, a prisoner. Prisoner of Jean Valjean.

The hand which had seized him from behind at the moment he was falling, and the grasp of which he had felt in losing consciousness, was the hand of Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean had taken no other part in the combat than to expose himself. Save for him, in that supreme phase of the death struggle, nobody would have thought of the wounded. Thanks to him, everywhere present in the carnage, like a providence, those who fell were taken up, carried into the basement-room, and their wounds dressed. In the intervals he repaired the barricade. But nothing which could resemble a blow, an attack, or even a personal defence, came from his hands. He was silent and gave aid. Moreover, he had only a few scratches. The balls refused him. If suicide were a part of what had occurred to him in coming to this sepulchre, in that respect he had not succeeded. But we doubt whether he had thought of suicide, an irreligious act.

Jean Valjean, in the thick cloud of the combat, did not appear to see Marius; the fact is, that he did not take his eyes from him. When a shot struck down Marius, Jean Valjean bounded with the agility of a tiger, dropped upon him as upon a prey, and carried him away.

The whirlwind of the attack at that instant concentrated so fiercely upon Enjolras and the door of the wine-shop, that nobody saw Jean Valjean cross the unpaved field of the barricade, holding the senseless Marius in his arms, and disappear behind the corner of the house of Corinth.

It will be remembered that this corner was a sort of cape on the street; it sheltered from balls and grape, and from sight also, a few square feet of ground. Thus, there is sometimes in conflagrations a room which does not burn; and in the most furious seas, beyond a promontory or at the end of a cul-de-sac of shoals, a placid little haven. It was in this recess of the interior trapezium of the barricade that Eponine had died.

There Jean Valjean stopped; he let Marius slide to the ground, set his back to the wall, and cast his eyes about him.

The situation was appalling.

For the moment, for two or three minutes, perhaps, this skirt of wall was a shelter; but how escape from this massacre? He remembered the anguish in which he was in the Rue Polonceau, eight years before, and how he had succeeded in escaping; that was difficult then, to-day it was impossible. Before him he had that deaf and implacable house of six stories, which seemed inhabited only by the dead man leaning over his window; on his right he had the low barricade, which closed the Petite Truanderie; to clamber over this obstacle appeared easy, but above the crest of the wall a range of bayonet-points could be seen. A company of the line was posted beyond this barricade, on the watch. It was evident that to cross the barricade was to meet the fire of a platoon, and that every head which should venture to rise above the top of the wall of paving-stones would serve as a target for sixty muskets. At his left he had the field of the combat. Death was behind the corner of the wall.

What should he do?

A bird alone could have escaped from that place.

And he must decide upon the spot, find an expedient, adopt his course. They were fighting a few steps from him; by good luck all were fiercely intent upon a single point, the door of the wine-shop; but let one soldier, a single one, conceive the idea of turning the house, of attacking it in flank, and all was over.

Jean Valjean looked at the house in front of him, he looked at the barricade by the side of him, then he looked upon the ground, with the violence of the last extremity, in desperation, and as if he would have made a hole in it with his eyes.

Beneath his persistent look something vaguely tangible in such an agony outlined itself and took form at his feet, as if there were a power in the eye to develop the thing desired. He perceived a few steps from him, at the foot of the little wall so pitilessly watched and guarded on the outside, under some fallen paving-stones which partly hid it, an iron grating laid flat and level with the ground. This grating, made of strong transverse bars, was about two feet square. The stone frame which held it had been torn up, and it was, as it were, unset. Through the bars a glimpse could be caught of an obscure opening, something like the flue of a chimney or the main of a cistern. Jean Valjean sprang forward. His old science of escape mounted to his brain like a flash. To remove the stones, to lift the grating, to load Marius, who was as inert as a dead body, upon his shoulders, to descend with that burden upon his back, by the aid of his elbows and knees, into this kind of well, fortunately not very deep, to let fall over his head the heavy iron trap-door upon which the stones were shaken back again, to find a foothold upon a flagged surface ten feet below the ground, this was executed, like what is done in delirium, with the strength of a giant and the rapidity of an eagle; it required but very few moments.

Jean Valjean found himself, with Marius still senseless, in a sort of long underground passage.

There deep peace, absolute silence, night.

The impression which he had formerly felt in falling from the street into the convent came back to him. Only what he was now carrying away was not Cosette; it was Marius.

He could now hardly hear above him, like a vague murmur, the fearful tumult of the wine-shop taken by assault.



BOOK SECOND—THE INTESTINE OF  
LEVIATHAN

## I

## THE EARTH IMPOVERISHED BY THE SEA

PARIS throws 5,000,000 francs a year into the sea. And this without metaphor. How and in what manner? Day and night. With what object? Without any object. With what thought? Without thinking of it. For what return? For nothing. By means of what organ? By means of its intestine. What is its intestine? Its sewer.

Five million francs is the most moderate of the approximate figures which the estimates of special science give.

Science, after long experiment, now knows that the most fertilizing and the most effective of manures is that of man. The Chinese, we must say to our shame, knew it before us. No Chinese peasant, Eckerberg tells us, goes to the city without carrying back, at the two ends of his bamboo, two buckets full of what we call filth. Thanks to human fertilization, the earth in China is still as young as in the days of Abraham. Chinese wheat yields 120 fold. There is no guano comparable in fertility to the detritus of a capital. A great city is the most powerful of stercoraries. To employ the city to enrich the plain would be a sure success. If our gold is filth, on the other hand, our filth is gold.

What is done with this filth, gold? It is swept into the abyss.

We fit out convoys of ships at great expense to gather up at the south pole the droppings of petrels and penguins, and the incalculable element of wealth which we have under our own hand we send to the sea. All the human and animal manure which the world loses, restored to the land instead of being thrown into the water, would suffice to nourish the world.

These heaps of garbage at the corners of the stone blocks, these tumbrils of mire jolting through the streets at night, these horrid scavengers' carts, these fetid streams of subterranean slime which the pavement hides from you, do you know what all this is? It is the flowering meadow, it is

the green grass, it is marjoram and thyme and sage, it is game, it is cattle, it is the satisfied low of huge oxen at evening, it is perfumed hay, it is golden corn, it is bread on your table, it is warm blood in your veins, it is health, it is joy, it is life. Thus wills that mysterious creation which is transformation upon earth and transfiguration in heaven.

Put that into the great crucible; your abundance shall spring from it. The nutrition of the plains makes the nourishment of men.

You have the power to throw away this wealth and to think me ridiculous into the bargain. That will cap the climax of your ignorance.

Statistics show that France, alone, makes a liquidation of 100,000,000 francs every year into the Atlantic from the mouths of her rivers. Mark this: with that 100,000,000 francs you might pay a quarter of the expenses of the government. The cleverness of man is such that he prefers to throw this 100,000,000 francs into the gutter. It is the very substance of the people which is carried away, here drop by drop, there in floods, by the wretched vomiting of our sewers into the rivers, and the gigantic collection of our rivers into the ocean. Each hiccough of our cloaca costs us 1,000 francs. From this two results: the land impoverished and the water infected. Hunger rising from the furrow and disease rising from the river.

It is notorious, for instance, that at this hour the Thames is poisoning London.

As for Paris, it has been necessary, within a few years past, to carry most of the mouths of the sewers down the stream below the last bridge.

A double tubular arrangement, provided with valves and sluiceways, sucking up and flowing back, a system of elementary drainage as simple as the lungs of man, and which is already in full operation in several villages in England, would suffice to bring into our cities the pure water of the fields and send back into our fields the rich water of the cities; and this easy see-saw, the simplest in the world, would retain in our possession the 100,000,000 francs thrown away. We are thinking of something else.

The present system does harm in endeavoring to do good. The intention is good, the result is sad. Men think they are purging the city, they are emaciating the population.

A sewer is a mistake. When drainage everywhere, with its double functions, restoring what it takes away, shall have replaced the sewer, that simple impoverishing washing, then, this being combined with the data of a new social economy, the products of the earth will be increased tenfold, and the problem of misery will be wonderfully diminished. Add the suppression of parasitism, it will be solved.

In the meantime, the public wealth runs off into the river and the leakage continues. Leakage is the word. Europe is ruining herself in this way by exhaustion.

As for France, we have just named her figure. Now, Paris containing a twenty-fifth of the total French population, and the Parisian guano being the richest of all, we are within the truth in estimating at 5,000,000 francs the portion of Paris in the loss of the 100,000,000 francs which France annually throws away. These 5,000,000 francs employed in aid and in enjoyment, would double the splendor of Paris. The city expends them in cloacæ. So that we may say that the great prodigality of Paris, her marvelous fête, her beaujon folly, her orgy, her full-handed outpouring of gold, her pageant, her luxury, her magnificence, is her sewer.

It is in this way that, in the blindness of a vicious political economy, we drown and let float down the stream and be lost in the depths the welfare of all. There should be St. Cloud nettings for the public fortune.

Economically, the fact may be summed up thus: Paris a leaky basket.

Paris, that model city, that pattern of well-formed capitals of which every people endeavors to have a copy, that metropolis of the ideal, that august country of the initiative, of impulse and enterprise, that centre and that abode of mind, that nation city, that hive of the future, that marvelous compound of Babylon and Corinth, from the point of view which we have just indicated, would make a peasant of Fok-ian shrug his shoulders.

Imitate Paris, you will ruin yourself.

Moreover, particularly in this immemorial and senseless waste, Paris herself imitates.

These surprising absurdities are not new; there is no young folly in this. The ancients acted like the moderns.



"The cloacæ of Rome," says Liebig, "absorbed all the well-being of the Roman peasant." When the Campagna of Rome was ruined by the Roman sewer, Rome exhausted Italy, and when she had put Italy into her cloaca, she poured Sicily in, then Sardinia, then Africa. The sewer of Rome engulfed the world. This cloaca offered its maw to the city and to the globe. *Urbi et orbi*. Eternal city, unfathomable sewer.

In these things, as well as in others, Rome sets the example.

This example Paris follows, with all the stupidity peculiar to cities of genius.

For the necessities of the operation which we have just explained, Paris has another Paris under herself; a Paris of sewers; which has its streets, its crossings, its squares, its blind alleys, its arteries, and its circulation, which is slime, minus the human form.

For we must flatter nothing, not even a great people; where there is everything there is ignominy by the side of sublimity; and, if Paris contains Athens, the city of light, Tyre, the city of power, Sparta, the city of manhood, Nineveh, the city of prodigy, it contains also Lutetia, the city of mire.

Besides, the seal of her power is there also, and the Titanic sink of Paris realizes, among monuments, that strange ideal realized in humanity by some men, such as Machiavelli, Bacon, and Mirabeau; the sublimity of abjectness.

The subsoil of Paris, if the eye could penetrate the surface, would present the aspect of a colossal madrepore. A sponge has hardly more defiles and passages than the tuft of earth of fifteen miles' circuit upon which rests the ancient great city. Without speaking of the catacombs, which are a cave apart, without speaking of the inextricable trellis of the gas-pipes, without counting the vast tubular system for the distribution of living water which ends in the hydrants, the sewers of themselves alone form a prodigious dark network under both banks; a labyrinth the descent of which is its clew.

There is seen in the humid haze the rat which seems the product of the accouchement of Paris.

## II

## THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF THE SEWER

**I**MAGINE Paris taken off like a cover, a bird's-eye view of the subterranean network of the sewers will represent upon either bank a sort of huge branch ingrafted upon the river. Upon the right bank, the belt-sewer will be the trunk of this branch, the secondary conduits will be the limbs, and the primary drains will be the twigs.

This figure is only general and half exact, the right angle, which is the ordinary angle of this kind of underground ramification, being very rare in vegetation.

We shall form an image more closely resembling this strange geometric plan by supposing that we see spread out upon a background of darkness some grotesque alphabet of the east jumbled as in a medley, the shapeless letters of which are joined to each other, apparently pell-mell and as if by chance, sometimes by their corners, sometimes by their extremities.

The sinks and the sewers played an important part in the Middle Ages, in the lower empire, and in the ancient east. In them pestilence was born, in them despots died. The multitudes regarded almost with a religious awe these beds of corruption, monstrous cradles of death. The pit of vermin of Benares is not less bewildering than the pit of Lions of Babylon. Tiglath Pilezer, according to the Rabbinical books, swore by the sink of Nineveh. It was from the sewer of Munster that John of Leyden made his false moon rise; and it was from the cloaca pit of Kekhschab that his eastern Menæchmus, Mokannah, the veiled prophet of Khorassan, made his false sun rise.

The history of men is reflected in the history of cloacæ. The Germoniaë describe Rome. The sewer of Paris has been a terrible thing in time past. It has been a sepulchre, it has been an asylum. Crime, intelligence, social protest, liberty of conscience, thought, theft, all that human laws pursue, or have pursued, have hidden in this hole; the Maillotins in the fourteenth century, the Tire-laines in the fifteenth, the Huguenots in the sixteenth, the Illuminati of Morin in the seventeenth, the Chauffeurs in the eighteenth.

One hundred years ago the blow of the dagger by night came thence, the pickpocket in danger glided thither; the forest had its cave; Paris had its sewer. Vagabondage, that Gallic *picareria*, accepted the sewer as an affiliation of the Cour des Miracles, and at night, crafty and ferocious, returned into the Maubué vomitoria as into an alcove.

It was quite natural that those whose field of daily labor was the Cul-de-sac Vide-Gousset, or the Rue Coupe-George, should have for their nightly abode the culvert of the Chemin Vert or the Hurepoix kennel. Hence a swarm of traditions. All manner of phantoms haunt these long solitary corridors; putridity and miasma everywhere; here and there a breathing-hole through which Villon within chats with Rabelais without.

The sewer in old Paris is the rendezvous of all drainages and all assays. Political economy sees in it a detritus, social philosophy sees in it a residuum.

The sewer is the conscience of the city. All things converge into it and are confronted with one another. In this lurid place there is darkness, but there are no secrets. Everything has its real form, or at least its definitive form. This can be said for the garbage-heap, that it is no liar. Frankness has taken refuge in it. Basil's mask is found there, but we see the pasteboard, and the strings, and the inside as well as the outside, and it is emphasized with honest mud. Scapin's false nose is close by. All the uncleannesses of civilization, when once out of service, fall into this pit of truth, where the immense social slipping is brought to an end. They are swallowed up, but they are displayed in it.

This pell-mell is a confession. Here, no more false appearances, no possible plastering, the filth takes off its shirt, absolute nakedness, rout of illusions and of mirages, nothing more but what is, wearing the sinister face of what is ending. Reality and disappearance. Here, the stump of a bottle confesses drunkenness; the handle of a basket tells of domestic life; here, the apple core which has had literary opinions becomes again an apple core; the face on the big sou freely covers itself with verdigris, the spittle of Caiaphas encounters Falstaff's vomit, the louis d'or which comes from the gaming-house jostles the nail which



hangs the suicide's bit of rope; a livid fetus rolls by wrapped in the spangles which danced at the opera last Mardi Gras; a cup which has judged men wallows near a rottenness which was one of Peggy's petticoats; it is more than brotherhood, it is the closest intimacy. All that paints besmears. The last veil is rent. A sewer is a cynic. It tells all.

This sincerity of uncleanness pleases us, and is a relief to the soul. When a man has passed his time on the earth in enduring the spectacle of the grand airs which are assumed by reasons of state, oaths, political wisdom, human justice, professional honesty, the necessities of position, incorruptible robes, it is a consolation to enter a sewer and see the slime which befits it.

It is a lesson at the same time. As we have just said, history passes through the sewer. The St. Bartholomews filter, drop by drop, through the pavements. The great public assassinations, the political and religious butcheries, traverse this vault of civilization and push their dead into it. To the reflecting eye all the historic murders are there, in the hideous gloom, on their knees, with a little of their shroud for an apron, dolefully sponging their work. Louis XI is there with Tristan, Francis I is there with Duprat, Charles IX is there with his mother, Richelieu is there with Louis XIII, Louvois is there, Letellier is there, Hébert and Maillard are there, scraping the stones and endeavoring to efface all trace of their deeds. Beneath these vaults we hear the broom of these spectres. We breathe the enormous fetidness of social catastrophes. We see reddish reflections in the corners. There flows a terrible water, in which bloody hands have been washed.

The social observer should enter these shades. They are part of his laboratory. Philosophy is the microscope of thought. Everything desires to flee from it, but nothing escapes it. Tergiversation is useless. What phase of your character do you show in tergiversation? the shameful phase. Philosophy pursues evil with its rigid search, and does not permit it to glide away into nothingness. In the effacement of things which disappear, in the lessening of those which vanish, it recognizes everything. It reconstructs the purple from the rag and the woman from the

tatter. With the cloaca it reproduces the city; with the mire it reproduces its customs. From a fragment it infers the amphora, or the pitcher. It recognizes by the print of a finger-nail upon a parchment the difference between the Jewry of the Judengasse and the Jewry of the Ghetto. It finds in what remains what has been, the good, the ill, the false, the true, the stain of blood in the palace, the blot of ink in the cavern, the drop of grease in the brothel, trials undergone, temptations welcomed, orgies spewed out, the wrinkles which characters have received in abasing themselves, the trace of prostitution in souls which their own grossness had made capable of it, on the vests of the porters of Rome, the mark of Messalina's elbow.

### III

#### BRUNESEAU

**T**HE sewer of Paris in the Middle Ages was legendary. In the sixteenth century Henry II attempted an examination, which failed. Less than one hundred years ago the cloaca, Mercier bears witness, was abandoned to itself and became what it might.

Such was that ancient Paris, given up to quarrels, to indecisions and to gropings. It was for a long time stupid enough. Afterward, '89 showed how cities come to their wits. But, in the good old times, the capital had little head; she could not manage her affairs either morally or materially, nor better sweep away her filth than her abuses. Everything was an obstacle, everything raised a question. The sewer, for instance, was refractory to all itineracy. Men could no more succeed in guiding themselves through its channels than in understanding themselves in the city; above, the unintelligible; below, the inextricable; beneath the confusion of tongues there was the confusion of caves; labyrinth lined Babel.

Sometimes the sewer of Paris took it into its head to overflow, as if that unappreciated Nile were suddenly seized with wrath. There were, infamous to relate, inundations from the sewer. At intervals this stomach of civilization digested badly, the cloaca flowed back into the city's throat, and Paris had the aftertaste of its slime.

These resemblances of the sewer to remorse had some good in them; they were warnings, very badly received, however. The city was indignant that its mire should have so much audacity and did not countenance the return of the ordure. Drive it away better.

The inundation of 1802 is a present reminiscence with Parisians of 80. The mire spread out in a cross in the Place des Victoires, where the statue of Louis XIV is; it entered the Rue St. Honoré by the two mouths of the sewer of the Champs Elysées, the Rue St. Florentin by the St. Florentin sewer, the Rue Pierre à Poisson by the sewer of the Sonnerie, the Rue Popincourt by the sewer of the Chemin Vert, the Rue de la Roquette by the sewer of the Rue de Sappe; it covered the curbstones of the Rue des Champs Elysées to the depth of some fourteen inches; and, on the south, by the vomitoria of the Seine performing its function in the inverse way, it penetrated the Rue Mazarine, the Rue de l'Echaudé, and the Rue des Marais, where it stopped, having reached the length of 120 yards, just a few steps from the house which Racine had lived in, respecting, in the seventeenth century, the poet more than the king. It attained its maximum depth in the Rue St. Pierre, where it rose three feet above the flagging of the water-spouts, and its maximum extent in the Rue St. Sabin, where it spread out over a length of 261 yards.

At the commencement of this century the sewer of Paris was still a mysterious place. Mire can never be in good repute; but here ill-fame reached even fright. Paris dimly realized that she had a terrible cave beneath her. People talked of it as of that monstrous bog of Thebes which swarmed with scolopendras fifteen feet long, and which might have served as a bathing-tub for Behemoth. The big boots of the sewer-men never ventured beyond certain known points. They were still very near the time when the scavengers' tumbrils, from the top of which Sainte Foix fraternized with the Marquiss of Créqui, were simply emptied into the sewer. As for cleansing, that operation was confided to the showers, which obstructed more than they swept out. Rome still left some poetry to her cloaca, and called it *Gemoniæ*; Paris insulted hers and called it the "stink-hole." Science and superstition were at one



in regard to the horror. The stink-hole was not less revolting to hygiene than to legend. The Goblin Monk had appeared under the fetid arch of the Mouffetard sewer; the corpses of the Marmousets had been thrown into the sewer of the Barillerie; Fagan had attributed the fearful malignant fever of 1685 to the great gap in the sewer of the Marais which remained yawning until 1833, in the Rue St. Louis, almost in front of the sign of the Gallant Messenger. The mouth of the sewer of the Rue de la Mortellerie was famous for the pestilence which came from it; with its pointed iron grating, which looked like a row of teeth, it lay in that fatal street like the jaws of a dragon blowing hell upon men. The popular imagination seasoned the gloomy Parisian sink with an indefinitely hideous mixture of the infinite. The sewer was bottomless. The sewer was the barathrum. The idea of exploring these leprous regions did not occur even to the police. To tempt that unknown, to throw the lead into that darkness, to go on a voyage of discovery in that abyss, who would have dared? It was frightful. Somebody came forward, however. The cloaca had its Columbus.

One day in 1805, on one of those rare visits which the emperor made to Paris, the minister of the interior came to the master's private audience. In the carousal was heard the clatter of the swords of all those marvelous soldiers of the grand republic and the grand empire; there was a multitude of heroes at the door of Napoleon; men of the Rhine, of the Scheldt, of the Adige and of the Nile; companions of Joubert, of Desaix, of Marceau, of Hoche, of Kléber; balloonists of Fleurus; grenadiers of Mayence, pontooniers of Genoa, hussars whom the pyramids had beheld, artillerymen whom Junot's ball had bespattered, cuirassiers who had taken by assault the fleet at anchor in the Zuyder Zee; these had followed Bonaparte over the bridge of Lodi; those had been with Murat in the trenches of Mantua; others had preceded Lannes in the sunken road of Montebello. The whole army of that time was there, in the court of the Tuileries, represented by a squad or a platoon, guarding Napoleon in repose; and it was the splendid epoch when the grand army had behind it Marengo and before it Austerlitz. "Sire," said the minister of the interior to Napoleon, "I saw yesterday the boldest

man in your empire." "Who is the man?" said the Emperor, quickly, "and what has he done?" "He wishes to do something, sire." "What?" "To visit the sewers of Paris."

That man existed and his name was Bruneseau.

## IV

### DETAILS IGNORED

THE visit was made. It was a formidable campaign; a night battle against pestilence and asphyxia. It was at the same time a voyage of discoveries. One of the survivors of this exploration, an intelligent workingman, then very young, still related a few years ago the curious details which Bruneseau thought it his duty to omit in his report to the prefect of the police as unworthy the administrative style. Disinfecting processes were very rudimentary at that period. Hardly had Bruneseau passed the first branchings of the subterranean network when eight out of the twenty laborers refused to go further. The operation was complicated; the visit involved the cleaning; it was necessary, therefore, to clean, and at the same time to measure; to note the entrance of water, to count the gratings and the mouths, to detail the branchings, to indicate the currents at the points of separation, to examine the respective borders of the various basins, to fathom the little sewers ingrafted upon the principal sewer, to measure the height of each passage under the keystone, and the width, as well at the spring of the arch as at the level of the floor; finally, to determine the ordinates of the levelings at a right angle with each entrance of water, either from the floor of the sewer, or from the surface of the street. They advanced with difficulty. It was not uncommon for step-ladders to plunge into three feet of mire. The lanterns flickered in the miasms. From time to time they brought out a sewer man who had fainted. At certain places, a precipice. The soil had sunken, the pavement had crumbled, the sewer had changed into a blind well; they found no solid ground; one man suddenly disappeared; they had great difficulty in recovering him. By the advice of Fourcroy, they lighted from

point to point, in the places sufficiently purified, great cages full of oakum and saturated with resin. The wall, in places, was covered with shapeless fungi, and one would have said with tumors; the stone itself seemed diseased in this irrespirable medium.

Bruneseau, in his exploration, proceeded from the head toward the mouth. At the point of separation of the two water-pipes from the Grand Hurlleur he deciphered upon a projecting stone the date 1550; this stone indicated the limit reached by Philbert Delorme, who was charged by Henry II with visiting the subterranean canals of Paris. This stone was the mark of the sixteenth century upon the sewer; Bruneseau also found the handiwork of the seventeenth century in the conduit of the Ponceau and the conduit of the Rue Vielle du Temple, built between 1600 and 1650, and the handiwork of the eighteenth century in the western section of the collecting canal, banked up and arched in 1740. These two arches, especially the latter one, that of 1740, were more cracked and more dilapidated than the masonry of the belt sewer, which dated from 1412, the epoch when the fresh water brook of Ménilmontant was raised to the dignity of Grand sewer of Paris, an advancement analogous to that of a peasant who should become valet-de-chambre to the king; something like Gros Jean transformed into Lebel.

They thought they recognized here and there, chiefly under the Palais de Justice, some cells of ancient dungeons built in the sewer itself. Hideous *in pace*. An iron collar hung in one of these cells. They walled them all up. Some odd things were found; among other things the skeleton of an orang-outang, which disappeared from the Jardin des Plantes in 1800, a disappearance probably connected with the famous and incontestable appearance of the devil in the Rue des Barnardins in the last year of the eighteenth century. The poor devil finally drowned himself in the sewer.

Under the long arched passage which terminates at the Arche Marion, a ragpicker's basket, in perfect preservation, was the admiration of connoisseurs. Everywhere the mud, which the workmen had come to handle boldly, abounded in precious objects, gold and silver trinkets, precious stones, coins. A giant who should have filtered



this cloaca would have had the riches of centuries in his sieve. At the point of separation of the two branches of the Rue du Temple and the Rue Sainte Avoye, they picked up a singular Huguenot medal in copper, bearing on one side a hog wearing a cardinal's hat, and on the other a wolf with the tiara on his head.

The most surprising discovery was at the entrance of the Grand sewer. This entrance had been formerly closed by a grating, of which the hinges only remained. Hanging to one of these hinges was a sort of shapeless and filthy rag, which, doubtless, caught there on its passage, had fluttered in the darkness and was finally worn to tatters. Bruneseau approached his lantern to this strip and examined it. It was of very fine cambric, and they made out at the least worn of the corners a heraldic crown embroidered above these seven letters: "Lavbesp." The crown was a marquis' crown, and the seven letters signified "*Laubespine*." They recognized that what they had before their eyes was a piece of Marat's winding-sheet. Marat, in his youth, had had his amours. It was when he made a portion of the household of the Count d'Artois in the capacity of physician of the stables. From these amours, a matter of history, with a great lady, there remained to him this sheet. Waif or souvenir. At his death, as it was the only fine linen he had in his house, he was shrouded in it. Old women dressed out for the tomb in this cloth in which there had been pleasure, the tragic friend of the people. Bruneseau passed on. They left this scrap where it was; they did not make an end of it. Was this contempt or respect? Marat deserved both. And, then, destiny was so imprinted upon it that they might hesitate to touch it. Besides, we should leave the things of the grave in the place which they choose. In short, the relic was strange. A marchioness had slept upon it; Marat had rotted in it; it had passed through the Pantheon to come at last to the rats of the sewer. This rag of the alcove, every fold of which Watteau would once have gladly sketched, had at last become worthy of Dante's fixed regard.

The complete visitation of the subterranean sewer system of Paris occupied seven years, from 1805 to 1812. While yet he was performing it, Bruneseau laid out, di-

rected, and brought to an end some considerable works; in 1808 he lowered the floor of the Ponceau, and, creating new lines everywhere, he extended the sewer, in 1809, under the Rue Saint Denis as far as the Fontaine des Innocents; in 1810, under the Rue Froidmanteau and under La Salpêtrière; in 1811, under the Rue Neuve des Petits Pères, the Rue du Mail, the Rue de l'Echarpe, and the Place Royale; in 1812, under the Rue de la Paix and the Chaussée d'Antin. At the same time he disinfected and purified the whole network. After the second year Bruneseau was assisted by his son-in-law, Nargaud.

Thus, at the beginning of this century, the old society cleansed its double bottom and made the toilet of its sewer. It was at least so much cleaned.

Tortuous, fissured, unpaved, crackling, interrupted by quagmires, broken by fantastic elbows, rising and falling out of all rule, fetid, savage, wild, submerged, in obscurity, with scars on its pavements and gashes on its walls, appalling, such was, seen retrospectively, the ancient sewer of Paris. Ramifications in every direction, crossings of trenches, branchings, goose-tracks, stars as if in mines, cœcums, cul-de-sacs, arches covered with saltpetre, infectious cesspools, a herpetic ooze upon the walls, drops falling from the ceiling, darkness; nothing equaled the horror of this old voiding crypt, the digestive apparatus of Babylon, cavern, grave, gulf pierced with streets, Titanic molehill, in which the mind seems to see prowling through the shadow, in the ordure which has been splendor, that enormous blind mole, the past.

This, we repeat, was the sewer of former times.

## V

### PRESENT PROGRESS

AT present the sewer is neat, cold, straight, correct. It almost realizes the ideal of what is understood in England by the word "respectable." It is comely and sombre; drawn by the line; we might almost say fresh from the band-box. It is like a contractor become a councilor of state. We almost see clearly in it. The filth comports itself decently. At the first glance, we should readily take

it for one of those underground passages formerly so common and so useful for the flight of monarchs and princes, in that good old time "when the people loved their kings." The present sewer is a beautiful sewer; the pure style reigns in it; the classic rectilinear Alexandrine which, driven from poetry, appears to have taken refuge in architecture, seems mingled with every stone of that long darkling and whitish arch; each discharging mouth is an arcade; the Rue de Rivoli rules the school even in the cloaca. However, if the geometric line is in place anywhere, it surely is in the stercorary trenches of a great city. There all should be subordinated to the shortest road. The sewer has now assumed a certain official aspect. The very police reports, of which it is sometimes the object, are no longer wanting in respect for it. The words which characterize it in the administrative language are elevated and dignified. What was called a gut is called a gallery; what was called a hole is called a vista. Villon would no longer recognize his old dwelling in case of need. This network of caves has still indeed its immemorial population of rodents, swarming more than ever; from time to time, a rat, an old mustache, risks his head at the window of the sewer and examines the Parisians; but these vermin themselves have grown tame, content as they are with their subterranean place. The cloaca has now nothing of its primitive ferocity. The rain, which befouled the sewer of former times, washes the sewer of the present day. Do not trust in it too much, however. Miasmas still inhabit it. It is rather hypocritical than irreproachable. The préfecture of police and the health commission have labored in vain. In spite of all the processes of purification, it exhales a vague odor, suspicious as Tartuffe after confession.

Let us admit, as all things considered, street-cleaning is a homage which the sewer pays to civilization, and as, from this point of view, Tartuffe's conscience is an advance upon Augeas' stable, it is certain that the sewer of Paris has been ameliorated.

It is more than an advance; it is a transmutation. Between the ancient sewer and the present sewer there is a revolution. Who has wrought this revolution?

The man whom everybody forgets, and whom we have named—Bruneseau.



## VI

## FUTURE PROGRESS

THE excavation of the sewer of Paris has been no small work. The last ten centuries have labored upon it without being able to complete it any more than to finish Paris. The sewer, indeed, receives all the impulsions of the growth of Paris. It is, in the earth, a species of dark polyp with a thousand antennæ which grows beneath at the same time that the city grows above. Whenever the city opens a street the sewer puts out an arm. The old monarchy had constructed only 25,480 yards of sewers; Paris was at that point on the 1st of January, 1806. From that epoch, of which we shall speak again directly, the work was profitably and energetically resumed and continued; Napoleon built—the figures are interesting—5,254 yards; Louis XVIII, 6,244; Charles X, 11,851; Louis Philippe, 97,355; the Republic of 1848, 25,570; the existing régime, 70,100; in all, at the present hour, 247,828 yards—140 miles of sewers—the enormous entrails of Paris. Obscure ramification always at work; unnoticed and immense construction.

As we see, the subterranean labyrinth of Paris is to-day more than tenfold what it was at the commencement of the century. It is hard to realize all the perseverance and effort which were necessary to bring this cloaca to the point of relative perfection where it now is. It was with great difficulty that the old monarchical provostship, and in the last ten years of the eighteenth century the revolutionary mayoralty, had succeeded in piercing the thirteen miles of sewers which existed before 1806. All manner of obstacles hindered this operation, some peculiar to the nature of the soil, others inherent in the very prejudices of the laboring population of Paris. Paris is built upon a deposit singularly rebellious to the spade, the hoe, the drill, to human control. Nothing more difficult to pierce and to penetrate than that geological formation upon which is superposed the wonderful historical formation called Paris; as soon as, under whatever form, labor commences and ventures into that street of alluvium, subter-

aneous resistance abounds. There are liquid clays, living springs, hard rocks, those soft and deep mires which technical science calls Moutardes. The pick advances laboriously into these calcareous strata alternating with seams of very fine clay and laminar schistose beds, incrustated with oyster shells contemporary with the pre-Adamite oceans. Sometimes a brook suddenly throws down an arch which has been commenced and inundates the laborers; or a slide of marl loosens and rushes down with the fury of a cataract, crushing the largest of the sustaining timbers like glass. Quite recently at Villette, when it was necessary, without interrupting navigation and without emptying the canal, to lead the collecting sewer under the St. Martin Canal, a fissure opened in the bed of the canal; the water suddenly rose in the works underground, beyond all the power of the pumps; they were obliged to seek the fissure, which was in the neck of the great basin, by means of a diver; and it was not without difficulty that it was stopped. Elsewhere, near the Seine, and even at some distance from the river, as, for instance, at Belleville, Grande Rue, and the Lunière Arcade, we find quicksands in which we sink, and a man may be buried out of sight. Add asphyxia from the miasma, burial by the earth falling in, sudden settlements of the bottom. Add typhus, with which the laborers are slowly impregnated. In our day, after having excavated the gallery of Clichy with a causeway to receive a principal water-pipe from the Ourcq, a work executed in a trench over ten yards in depth; after having, in spite of slides, by means of excavations, often putrid, and by props, arched the Bièvre from the Boulevard de l'Hôpital to the Seine; after having to deliver Paris from the smelling waters of Montmartre, and to furnish an outlet for that fluvial sea of twenty-two acres which stagnated near the Barrière des Martyrs; after having, we say, constructed the line of sewers from the Barrière Blance to the Aubervilliers road in four months, working day and night, at a depth of twelve yards; after having, a thing which had not been seen before, executed entirely underground a sewer in the Rue Barre du Bec without a trench, twenty feet below the surface, Superintendent Monnot died. After having arched 3,000 yards of sewers in all parts of the city, from the Rue Traversière St. Antoine to the Rue

de l'Ourcine; after having, by the branching of the Arbalète, relieved the Censier Mouffetard square from inundation by the rain; after having built the St. Georges sewer upon stonework and concrete in the quicksand; after having directed the dangerous lowering of the floor of the Notre Dame de Nazareth branch, Engineer Duleau died. There are no bulletins for these acts of bravery, more profitable, however, than the stupid slaughter on the battlefield.

The sewers of Paris, in 1832, were far from being what they are to-day. Bruneseau had made a beginning, but it required the cholera to determine the vast reconstruction which has since taken place. It is surprising to say, for instance, that, in 1821, a portion of the belt sewer, called the Grand Canal, as at Venice, was still stagnating in the open sky, in the Rue des Gourdes. It was only in 1823 that the city of Paris found in its pockets the \$49,890.01 necessary for the covering of this shame. The three absorbing wells of the Combat, the Cunette, and St. Mandé, with their discharging mouths, their apparatus, their pits, and their depuratory branches, date only from 1836. The intestinal canal of Paris has been rebuilt anew, and, as we have said, increased more than tenfold within a quarter of a century.

Thirty years ago, at the period of the insurrection of the 5th and 6th of June, it was still, in many places, almost the ancient sewer. A very large number of streets, now vaulted, were then hollow causeways. You very often saw, at the low point in which the gutters of a street or a square terminated, large rectangular gratings with great bars, the iron of which shone, polished by the feet of the multitude, dangerous and slippery for wagons, and making the horses stumble. The official language of roads and bridges gave to these low points and grating the expressive name of *Cassis*. In 1832, in many streets, the Rue du l'Etoile, the Rue St. Louis, the Rue du Temple, the Rue Vielle du Temple, the Rue Notre Dame de Nazareth, the Rue Folie Méricourt, the Quai aux Fleurs, the Rue du Petit Musc, the Rue de Normandie, the Rue Pont aux Biches, the Rue des Marais, Faubourg St. Martin, the Rue Notre Dame des Victoires, Faubourg Montmartre, the Rue Grange Batelière in the Champs Elysées, the



Rue Jacob, the Rue de Tournon, the old gothic cloaca still cynically showed its jaws. They were enormous sluggish gaps of stone, sometimes surrounded by stone blocks, with monumental effrontery.

Paris, in 1806, was still almost at the figure of sewers established in May, 1663; 5,328 fathoms. According to Bruneseau, on the 1st of January, 1832, there were 44,073 yards. From 1806 to 1831, there were built annually, on an average, 820 yards; since then there have been constructed every year 8,000, and even 10,000, yards of galleries, in masonry of small materials laid in hydraulic cement on a foundation of concrete.

At \$35 a yard, the 140 miles of sewers of the present Paris represent \$9,000,000.

Besides the economical progress which we pointed out in commencing, grave problems of public hygiene are connected with this immense question—the sewer of Paris.

Paris is between two sheets, a sheet of water and a sheet of air. The sheet of water lying at a considerable depth underground, but already reached by two borings, is furnished by the bed of greensand lying between the chalk and the jurassic limestone; this bed may be represented by a disk with a radius of seventy miles; a multitude of rivers and brooks filter into it; we drink the Seine, the Marne, the Yonne, the Oise, the Aisne, the Cher, the Vienne, and the Loire, in a glass of water from the well of Grenelle. The sheet of water is salubrious; it comes, first from heaven, then from the earth; the sheet of air is unwholesome, it comes from the sewer. All the miasmas of the cloaca are mingled with the respiration of the city; hence that foul breath. The air taken from above a dunghill—this has been scientifically determined—is purer than the air taken from above Paris. In a given time, progress aiding, mechanisms being perfected and light increasing, the sheet of water will be employed to purify the sheet of air. That is to say, to wash the sewer. By washing the sewer, of course, we understand: restitution of the mire to the land; return of the muck to the soil, and the manure to the fields. There will result from this simple act to the whole social community a diminution of misery and an augmentation of health. At the present hour the radiation

of the diseases of Paris extends 150 miles about the Louvre, taken as the hub of this pestilential wheel.

We might say that for ten centuries the cloaca has been the disease of Paris. The sewer is the taint which the city has in her blood. The popular instinct is never mistaken. The trade of sewerman was formerly almost as perilous and almost as repulsive to the people as the trade of knacker, so long stricken with horror and abandoned to the executioner. It required high wages to persuade a mason to disappear in that fetid ooze; the well-digger's ladder hesitated to plunge into it; it was said proverbially: to descend into the sewer is to enter the grave; and all manner of hideous legends, as we have said, covered this colossal drain with dismay; awful sink which bears the traces of the revolutions of the globe as well as of the revolutions of men, and in which we find vestiges of all the cataclysms, from the shell-fish of the deluge down to the rag of Marat.

## BOOK THIRD—MIRE, BUT SOUL

### I

#### THE CLOACA AND ITS SURPRISES

**I**T was in the sewer of Paris that Jean Valjean found himself.

Further resemblance of Paris with the sea. As in the ocean, the diver can disappear.

The transition was marvelous. From the very centre of the city Jean Valjean had gone out of the city, and in the twinkling of an eye, the time of lifting a cover and closing it again, he had passed from broad day to complete obscurity, from noon to midnight, from uproar to silence, from the whirl of the thunder to the stagnation of the tomb, and by a mutation much more prodigious still than that of the Rue Polonceau, from the most extreme peril to the most absolute security.

Sudden fall into a cave; disappearance in the dungeon of Paris; to leave that street in which death was everywhere for this kind of sepulchre in which there was life was an astonishing crisis. He remained for some seconds

as if stunned; listening stupefied. The spring trap of safety had suddenly opened beneath him. Celestial goodness had in some sort taken him by treachery. Adorable ambuscades of Providence!

Only the wounded man did not stir, and Jean Valjean did not know whether what he was carrying away in this grave were alive or dead.

His first sensation was blindness. Suddenly he saw nothing more. It seemed to him also that in one minute he had become deaf. He heard nothing more. The frenzied storm of murder which was raging a few feet above him only reached him, as we have said, thanks to the thickness of the earth which separated him from it, stifled and indistinct, and like a rumbling at a great depth. He felt that it was solid under his feet; that was all; but that was enough. He reached out one hand, then the other, and touched the wall on both sides, and realized that the passage was narrow; he slipped and realized that the pavement was wet. He advanced one foot with precaution, fearing a hole, a pit, some gulf; he made sure that the flagging continued. A whiff of fetidness informed him where he was.

After a few moments he ceased to be blind. A little light fell from the airhole through which he had slipped in, and his eye became accustomed to this cave. He began to distinguish something. The passage in which he was earthed, no other word better expresses the condition, was walled up behind him. It was one of those cul-de-sacs technically called branchments. Before him there was another wall, a wall of night. The light from the airhole died out ten or twelve paces from the point at which Jean Valjean stood, and scarcely produced a pallid whiteness over a few yards of the damp wall of the sewer. Beyond, the opaqueness was massive; to penetrate it appeared horrible; and to enter it seemed like being engulfed. He could, however, force his way into that wall of mist and he must do it. He must even hasten. Jean Valjean thought that that grating, noticed by him under the paving-stones, might also be noticed by the soldiers, and that all depended upon that chance. They also could descend into the well and explore it. There was not a minute to be lost. He had laid Marius upon the ground, he gathered him up—



this is again the right word—replaced him upon his shoulders and began his journey. He resolutely entered that obscurity.

The truth is that they were not so safe as Jean Valjean supposed. Perils of another kind, and not less great, awaited them, perhaps. After the flashing whirl of the combat, the cavern of miasmas and pitfalls; after chaos, the cloaca. Jean Valjean had fallen from one circle of hell to another.

At the end of fifty paces he was obliged to stop. A question presented itself. The passage terminated in another which it met transversely. These two roads were offered. Which should he take? Should he turn to the left or to the right? How guide himself in this black labyrinth? This labyrinth, as we have remarked, has a clew: its descent. To follow the descent is to go to the river.

Jean Valjean understood this at once.

He said to himself that he was probably in the sewer of the markets; that, if he should choose the left and follow the descent, he would come in less than a quarter of an hour to some mouth upon the Seine, between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf; that is to say, he would reappear in broad day in the most populous portion of Paris. He might come out in some gathering of corner idlers. Amazement of the passers-by at seeing two bloody men come out of the ground under their feet. Arrival of sergent-de-ville, call to arms in the next guard-house. He would be seized before getting out. It was better to plunge into the labyrinth, to trust to this darkness, and to rely on Providence for the issue.

He chose the right and went up the ascent.

When he had turned the corner of the gallery the distant gleam of the airhole disappeared, the curtain of obscurity fell back over him and he again became blind. He went forward nonetheless and as rapidly as he could. Marius' arms were passed about his neck and his feet hung behind him. He held both arms with one hand, and groped for the wall with the other. Marius' cheek touched his and stuck to it, being bloody. He felt a warm stream, which came from Marius, flow over him and penetrate his clothing. Still, a moist warmth at his ear, which touched

the wounded man's mouth, indicated respiration and consequently life. The passage through which Jean Valjean was now moving was not so small as the first. Jean Valjean walked in it with difficulty. The rains of the previous day had not yet run off and made a little stream in the centre of the floor, and he was compelled to hug the wall, to keep his feet out of the water. Thus he went on in midnight. He resembled the creatures of night groping in the invisible and lost underground in the veins of the darkness.

However, little by little, whether that some distant air-holes sent a little floating light into this opaque mist, or that his eyes became accustomed to the obscurity, some dim vision came back to him, and he again began to receive a confused perception, now of the wall which he was touching, and now of the arch under which he was passing.

The pupil dilates in the night, and at last finds day in it, even as the soul dilates in misfortune, and, at last, finds God in it.

To find his way was difficult.

The track of the sewers echoes, so to speak, the track of the streets which overlie them. There were in the Paris of that day 2,200 streets. Picture to yourselves below them the forest of dark branches which is called the sewer. The sewers existing at that epoch, placed end to end, would have given a length of thirty miles. We have already said that the present network, thanks to the extraordinary activity of the last thirty years, is not less than 140 miles.

Jean Valjean began with a mistake. He thought that he was under the Rue Saint Denis and it was unfortunate that he was not there. There is beneath the Rue Saint Denis an old stone sewer, which dates from Louis XIII, and which goes straight to the collecting sewer, called the Grand sewer, with a single elbow, on the right, at the height of the ancient Cour des Miracles, and a single branch, the St. Martin sewer, the four arms of which cut each other in a cross. But the gallery of the Petite Truanderie, the entrance to which was near the wine-shop of Corinth, never communicated with the underground passage in the Rue Saint Denis; it runs into the Montmartre sewer, and it was in that that Jean Valjean

was entangled. There, opportunities of losing one's self abound. The Montmartre sewer is one of the most labyrinthian of the ancient network. Luckily Jean Valjean had left behind him the sewer of the markets, the geometrical plan of which represents a multitude of interlocked top-gallant masts: but he had before him more than one embarrassing encounter and more than one street corner—for these are streets—presenting itself in the obscurity like a point of interrogation; first, at his left, the vast Plâtrière sewer, a kind of Chinese puzzle, pushing and jumbling its chaos of T's and Z's beneath the Hôtel des Postes and the rotunda of the grain market to the Seine, where it terminates in a Y; secondly, at his right, the crooked corridor of the Rue du Cadran with its three teeth, which are so many blind ditches; thirdly, at his left, the branch of the Mail, complicated almost at its entrance by a kind of fork, and after zigzag upon zigzag terminating in the great voiding crypt of the Louvre, truncated and ramified in all directions; finally, at the right, the cul-de-sac passage of the Rue des Jeuneurs, with countless little reducts here and there before arriving at the central sewer, which alone could lead him to some outlet distant enough to be secure.

If Jean Valjean had had any notion of what we have here pointed out, he would have quickly perceived, merely from feeling the wall, that he was not in the underground gallery of the Rue Saint Denis. Instead of the old hewn stone, instead of the ancient architecture, haughty and royal even in the sewer, with floor and running courses of granite and mortar of thick lime, which cost \$75 a yard, he would have felt beneath his hand the contemporary cheapness, the economical expedient, the millstone grit laid in hydraulic cement upon a bed of concrete, which cost \$35 a yard, the bourgeois masonry known as small material; but he knew nothing of all this.

He went forward with anxiety, but with calmness, seeing nothing, knowing nothing, plunged into chance, that is to say, swallowed up in Providence.

By degrees, we must say, some horror penetrated him. The shadow which enveloped him entered his mind. He was walking in an enigma. This aqueduct of the cloaca is formidable; it is dizzily intertangled. It is a dreary



thing to be caught in this Paris of darkness. Jean Valjean was obliged to find and almost to invent his route without seeing it. In that unknown region each step which he ventured might be the last. How should he get out? Should he find an outlet? Should he find it in time? Would this colossal subterranean sponge with cells of stone admit of being penetrated and pierced? Would he meet with some unlooked-for knot of obscurity? Would he encounter the inextricable and the insurmountable? Would Marius die of hemorrhage and he of hunger? Would they both perish there at last and make two skeletons in some niche of that night? He did not know. He asked himself all this and he could not answer. The intestine of Paris is an abyss. Like the prophet, he was in the belly of the monster.

Suddenly he was surprised. At the most unexpected moment, and without having diverged from a straight line, he discovered that he was no longer rising; the water of the brook struck coming against his heels instead of upon the top of his feet. The sewer now descended. What! would he, then, soon reach the Seine? This danger was great, but the peril of retreat was still greater. He continued to advance.

It was not toward the Seine that he was going. The saddle-back which the topography of Paris forms upon the right bank empties one of its slopes into the Seine and the other into the Grand sewer. The crest of this saddle-back, which determines the division of the waters, follows a very capricious line. The culminating point, which is the point of separation of the flow, is, in the St. Avoye sewer, beyond the Rue Michel de Comte, in the sewer of the Louvre, near the boulevards, and in the Montmartre sewer, near the markets. It was at this culminating point that Jean Valjean had arrived. He was making his way toward the belt sewer; he was on the right road. But he knew nothing of it.

Whenever he came to a branch he felt its angles, and if he found the opening not as wide as the corridor in which he was he did not enter, and continued his route, deeming rightly that every narrower way must terminate in a cul-de-sac and could only lead him away from his object, the outlet. He thus evaded the quadruple snare which was

spread for him in the obscurity, by the four labyrinths which we have just enumerated.

At a certain moment he felt that he was getting away from under the Paris which was petrified by the émeute, in which the barricades had suppressed the circulation, and that he was coming beneath the Paris which was alive and normal. He heard suddenly above his head a sound like thunder, distant, but continuous. It was the rumbling of the vehicles.

He had been walking for about half an hour, at least by his own calculation, and had not yet thought of resting; only he had changed the hand which supported Marius. The darkness was deeper than ever, but this depth reassured him.

All at once he saw his shadow before him. It was marked out on a feeble ruddiness almost indistinct, which vaguely empurpled the floor at his feet and the arch over his head, and which glided along at his right and his left on the two slimy walls of the corridor. In amazement he turned round.

Behind him, in the portion of the passage through which he had passed, at a distance which appeared to him immense, flamed, throwing its rays into the dense obscurity, a sort of horrible star which appeared to be looking at him.

It was the gloomy star of the police which was rising in the sewer.

Behind this star were moving without order eight or ten black forms, straight, indistinct, terrible.

## II

### EXPLANATION

**D**URING the day of the 6th of June a *battue* of the sewers had been ordered. It was feared that they would be taken as a refuge by the vanquished, and Prefect Gisquet was to ransack the occult Paris, while General Bugeaud was sweeping the public Paris; a connected double operation, which demanded a double strategy of the public power, represented above by the army and below by the police. Three platoons of officers and sewer men explored the subterranean streets of Paris; the first, the

right bank; the second, the left bank; the third, in the city. The officers were armed with carbines, clubs, swords, and daggers.

That which was at this moment directed upon Jean Valjean was the lantern of the patrol of the right bank.

This patrol had just visited the crooked gallery and the three blind alleys which are beneath the Rue du Cadran. While they were taking their candle to the bottom of these blind alleys Jean Valjean had come to the entrance of the gallery upon his way, had found it narrower than the principal passage and had not entered it. He had passed beyond. The policemen, on coming out from the Cadran gallery, had thought they heard the sound of steps in the direction of the belt sewer. It was, in fact, Jean Valjean's steps. The sergeant in command of the patrol lifted his lantern, and the squad began to look into the mist in the direction whence the sound came.

This was to Jean Valjean an indescribable moment.

Luckily, if he saw the lantern well, the lantern saw him badly. It was light and he was shadow. He was far off and merged in the blackness of the place. He drew close to the side of the wall and stopped.

Still, he formed no idea of what was moving there behind him. Lack of sleep, want of food, emotions, had thrown him also into the visionary state. He saw a flaring flame and about that flame goblins. What was it? He did not understand.

Jean Valjean having stopped, the noise ceased.

The men of the patrol listened and heard nothing; they looked and saw nothing. They consulted.

There was at that period a sort of square at this point of the Montmartre sewer, called *de service*, which has since been suppressed on account of the little interior lake which formed in it by the damming up in heavy storms of the torrents of rain-water. The patrol could gather in a group in this square.

Jean Valjean saw these goblins form a kind of circle. These mastiffs' heads drew near each other and whispered.

The result of this council held by the watch-dogs was that they had been mistaken, that there had been no noise, that there was nobody there, that it was needless to trouble themselves with the belt sewer, that that would be time lost,



but that they must hasten toward St. Merry; that if there were anything to do, any "*bousingot*" to track out, it was in that quarter.

From time to time parties put new soles to their old terms of insult. In 1832 the word *bousingot* filled the interim between the word *Jacobin*, which was worn out, and the word *démagogue*, then almost unused, but which has since done such excellent service.

The sergeant gave the order to file left—toward the descent to the Seine. If they had conceived the idea of dividing into two squads, and going in both directions, Jean Valjean would have been caught. That hung by this thread. It is probable that the instructions from the préfecture, foreseeing the possibility of a combat, and that the insurgents might be numerous, forbade the patrol to separate. The patrol resumed its march, leaving Jean Valjean behind. Of all these movements Jean Valjean perceived nothing except the eclipse of the lantern, which suddenly turned back.

Before going away, the sergeant, to ease the police conscience, discharged his carbine in the direction they were abandoning, toward Jean Valjean. The detonation rolled from echo to echo in the vault like the rumbling of this Titanic bowel. Some plastering, which fell into the stream and splattered the water a few steps from Jean Valjean, made him aware that the ball had struck the arch above his head.

Slow and measured steps resounded upon the floor for some time, more and more deadened by the progressive increase of the distance; the group of black forms sank away, a glimmer oscillated and floated, making a ruddy circle in the vault, which decreased, then disappeared; the silence became deep again, the obscurity became again complete, blindness and deafness resumed possession of the darkness, and Jean Valjean, not yet daring to stir, stood for a long time with his back to the wall, his ear intent and eye dilated, watching the vanishing of that phantom patrol.

## III

## THE MAN SPUN

WE must do the police of that period this justice, that, even in the gravest public conjunctures it imperturbably performed its duties, watchful and sanitary. An émeute was not in its eyes a pretext for giving malefactors a loose rein and for neglecting society because the government was in peril. The ordinary duty was performed correctly in addition to the extraordinary duty, and was not disturbed by it. In the midst of a beginning of an incalculable political event, under the pressure of a possible revolution, without allowing himself to be diverted by the insurrection and the barricade, an officer would "spin" a thief.

Something precisely like this occurred in the afternoon of the 6th of June at the brink of the Seine, on the beach of the right bank, a little beyond the Pont des Invalides.

There is no beach there now. The appearance of the place has changed.

On this beach two men, some distance apart, seemed to be observing each other, one avoiding the other. The one who was going before was endeavoring to increase the distance, the one who came behind to lessen it.

It was like a game of chess played from a distance and silently. Neither seemed to hurry, and both walked slowly, as if either feared that by too much haste he would double the pace of his partner.

One would have said it was an appetite following a prey, without appearing to do it on purpose. The prey was crafty and kept on its guard.

The requisite proportions between the tracked marten and the tracking hound were observed. He who was trying to escape had a feeble frame and a sorry mien; he who was trying to seize, a fellow of tall stature, was rough in aspect and promised to be rough in encounter.

The first, feeling himself the weaker, was avoiding the second. but he avoided him in a very furious way; he who could have observed him would have seen in his eyes the

gloomy hostility of flight and all the menace which there is in fear.

The beach was solitary; there were no passers; not even a boatman or a lighterman on the barges moored here and there.

These two men could not have been easily seen, except from the quay in front, and to him who might have examined them from that distance the man who was going forward would have appeared like a bristly creature, tattered and skulking, restless and shivering under a ragged blouse, and the other, like a classic and official person, wearing the overcoat of authority buttoned to the chin.

The reader would, perhaps, recognize these two men if he saw them nearer.

What was the object of the last?

Probably to put the first in a warmer dress.

When a man clad by the state pursues a man in rags it is in order to make of him also a man clad by the state. Only the color is the whole question. To be clad in blue is glorious; to be clad in red is disagreeable.

There is a purple of the depths.

It was probably some inconvenience and some purple of this kind that the first desired to escape.

If the other was allowing him to go on and did not yet seize him, it was, according to all appearance, in the hope of seeing him bring up at some significant rendezvous some group of good prizes. This delicate operation is called "spinning."

What renders this conjecture the more probable is, that the closely buttoned man, perceiving from the shore a fiacre which was passing on the quay empty, beckoned to the driver; the driver understood, evidently recognized with whom he had to do, turned his horse and began to follow the two men on the upper part of the quay at a walk. This was not noticed by the equivocal and ragged personage who was in front.

The fiacre rolled along the trees of the Champs Elysées. There could be seen moving above the parapet the bust of the driver, whip in hand.

One of the secret instructions of the police to officers contains this article: "Always have a vehicle within call, in case of need."



While manœuvring, each on his side, with an irreproachable strategy, these two men approached a slope of the quay descending to the beach, which, at that time, allowed the coach-drivers coming from Passy to go to the river to water their horses. This slope has since been removed, for the sake of symmetry; the horses perish with thirst, but the eye is satisfied.

It seemed probable that the man in the blouse would go up by this slope in order to attempt escape into the Champs Elysées, a place ornamented with trees, but, on the other hand, thickly dotted with officers, and where his pursuer would have easily seized him with a strong hand.

This point of the quay is very near the house brought from Moret to Paris, in 1824, by Colonel Brack, and called the house of Francis I. A guard-house is quite near by.

To the great surprise of his observer, the man pursued did not take the slope of the watering-place. He continued to advance on the beach along the quay.

His position was visibly becoming critical.

If not to throw himself into the Seine, what was he going to do?

No means henceforth of getting up to the quay; no other slope and no staircase; and they were very near the spot, marked by the turn of the Seine toward the Pont d'Iéna, where the beach, narrowing more and more, terminates in a slender tongue and is lost under the water. There he would inevitably find himself blockaded between the steep wall on the right, the river on the left, and in front an authority upon his heels.

It is true that this end of the beach was masked from sight by a mound of rubbish from six to seven feet high, the product of some demolition. But did this man hope to hide with any effect behind this heap of fragments, which the other had only to turn? The expedient would have been puerile. He certainly did not dream of it. The innocence of robbers does not reach this extent.

The heap of rubbish made a sort of eminence at the edge of the water, which was prolonged like a promontory, as far as the wall of the quay.

The man pursued reached this little hill and doubled it, so that he ceased to be seen by the other.

The latter, not seeing, was not seen; he took advantage

of this to abandon all dissimulation and to walk very rapidly. In a few seconds he came to the mound of rubbish and turned it. There he stopped in amazement. The man whom he was hunting was gone.

Total eclipse of the man in the blouse.

The beach beyond the mound of rubbish had scarcely a length of thirty yards, then it plunged beneath the water which beat against the wall of the quay.

The fugitive could not have thrown himself into the Seine nor scaled the quay without being seen by him who was following him. What had become of him?

The man in the closely buttoned coat walked to the end of the beach and stopped there a moment thoughtful, his fists convulsive, his eyes ferreting. Suddenly he slapped his forehead. He had noticed, at the point where the land and the water began, an iron grating, broad, low, arched, with a heavy lock and three massive hinges. This grating, a sort of door cut into the bottom of the quay, opened upon the river as much as upon the beach. A blackish stream flowed from beneath it. This stream emptied into the Seine.

Beyond its heavy rusty bars could be distinguished a sort of corridor, arched and obscure.

The man folded his arms and looked at the grating reproachfully.

This look not sufficing, he tried to push it. He shook it; it resisted firmly. It was probable that it had just been opened, although no sound had been heard, a singular circumstance with a grating so rusty; but it was certain that it had been closed again. That indicated that he before whom this door had just turned had not a hook, but a key.

This evident fact burst immediately upon the mind of the man who was exerting himself to shake the grating, and forced from him this indignant epiphonema:

"This is fine! A government key!"

Then, calming himself immediately, he expressed a whole world of interior ideas by this whiff of monosyllables accented almost ironically:

"Well! well! well! well!"

This said, hoping nobody knows what, either to see the man come out, or to see others go in, he posted himself

on the watch behind the heap of rubbish, with the patient rage of a pointer.

For its part, the fiacre, which followed all his movements, had halted above him near the parapet. The driver foreseeing a long stay, fitted the muzzles of his horses into the bag of wet oats, so well known to Parisians, to whom the government, be it said in parenthesis, sometimes applies it. The few passers over the Pont d'Iéna, before going away, turned their heads to look for a moment at these two motionless features of the landscape, the man on the beach, the fiacre on the quay.

#### IV

##### HE ALSO BEARS HIS CROSS

**J**EAN VALJEAN had resumed his advance and had not stopped again.

This advance became more and more laborious. The level of these arches varies; the medium height is about five feet six inches, and was calculated for the stature of a man; Jean Valjean was compelled to bend so as not to hit Marius against the arch; he had to stoop every second, then rise up, to grope incessantly for the wall. The moisture of the stones and the sliminess of the floor made them bad points of support, whether for the hand or the foot. He was wading in the hideous muck of the city. The occasional gleams from the airholes appeared only at long intervals, and so ghastly were they that the noonday seemed but moonlight; all the rest was mist, miasma, opacity, blackness. Jean Valjean was hungry and thirsty; thirsty especially; and this place, like the sea, is one full of water where you can not drink. His strength, which was prodigious, and very little diminished by age, thanks to his chaste and sober life, began to give way notwithstanding. Fatigue grew upon him, and as his strength diminished the weight of his load increased. Marius, dead perhaps, weighed heavily upon him, as inert bodies do. Jean Valjean supported him in such a way that his breast was not compressed and his breathing could always be as free as possible. He felt the rapid gliding of the rats between his legs. One of them was so frightened as to



bite him. There came to him from time to time through the aprons of the mouths of the sewer a breath of fresh air which revived him.

It might have been three o'clock in the afternoon when he arrived at the belt sewer.

He was first astonished at this sudden enlargement. He abruptly found himself in the gallery where his outstretched hands did not reach the two walls, and under an arch which his head did not touch. The Grand sewer, indeed, is eight feet wide and seven high.

At the point where the Montmartre sewer joins the Grand sewer, two other subterranean galleries, that of the Rue du Provence and that of the Abattoir, coming in, make a square. Between these four ways a less sagacious man would have been undecided. Jean Valjean took the widest, that is to say, the belt sewer. But here the question returned: to descend, or to ascend? He thought that the condition of affairs was urgent, and that he must, at whatever risk, now reach the Seine. In other words, descend. He turned to the left.

Well for him he did so. For it would be an error to suppose that the belt sewer has two outlets, the one toward Bercy, the other toward Passy, and that it is, as its name indicates, the subterranean belt of the Paris of the right bank. The Grand sewer, which is, it must be remembered, nothing more nor less than the ancient brook of M<sup>é</sup>nilmontant, terminates, if we ascend it, in a cul-de-sac, that is to say, its ancient starting-point, which was its spring, at the foot of the hill at M<sup>é</sup>nilmontant. It has no direct communication with the branch which gathers up the waters of Paris below the Popincourt quartier, and which empties into the Seine by the Amelot sewer above the ancient Ile Louviers. This branch, which completes the collecting sewer, is separated from it, under the Rue M<sup>é</sup>nilmontant even, by a solid wall which marks the point of separation of the waters up and down. Had Jean Valjean gone up the gallery he would have come, after manifold efforts, exhausted by fatigue, expiring, in the darkness, to a wall. He would have been lost.

Strictly speaking, by going back a little, entering the passage of the Filles du Calvaire, if he did not hesitate at the subterranean goose-track of the Boucherat crossing, by

taking the St. Louis corridor, then, on the left, the St. Gilles passage, then by turning to the right and avoiding the St. Sébastien gallery, he might have come to the Amelot sewer, and thence, provided he had not gone astray in the sort of F which is beneath the Bastille, reached the outlet on the Seine near the arsenal. But, for that, he must have been perfectly familiar in all its ramifications and in all its tubes with the huge madrepoire of the sewer. Now, we must repeat, he knew nothing of this frightful system of paths along which he was making his way; and, had anybody asked him where he was, he would have answered: "In the night."

His instinct served him well. To descend was, in fact, possible safety.

He left on his right the two passages which ramify in the form of a claw under the Rue Lafitte and the Rue St. Georges, and the long forked corridor of the Chaussée d'Antin.

A little beyond an affluent, which was probably the branching of the Madeleine, he stopped. He was very tired. A large airhole, probably the vista on the Rue d'Anjou, produced an almost vivid light. Jean Valjean, with the gentleness of movement of a brother for his wounded brother, laid Marius upon the side bank of the sewer. Marius' bloody face appeared under the white gleam from the airhole, as if at the bottom of a tomb. His eyes were closed, his hair adhered to his temples like brushes dried in red paint, his hands dropped down lifeless, his limbs were cold, there was coagulated blood at the corners of his mouth. A clot of blood had gathered in the tie of his cravat; his shirt was bedded in the wounds, the cloth of his coat chafed the gaping gashes in the living flesh. Jean Valjean, removing the garments with the ends of his fingers, laid his hand upon his breast; the heart still beat. Jean Valjean tore up his shirt, bandaged the wounds as well as he could, and stanching the flowing blood; then, bending in this twilight over Marius, who was still unconscious and almost lifeless, he looked at him with an inexpressible hatred.

In opening Marius' clothes he had found two things in his pockets, the bread which had been forgotten there since the day previous, and Marius' pocket-book. He ate

the bread and opened the pocket-book. On the first page he found these lines written by Marius. They will be remembered:

My name is Marius Pontmercy. Carry my corpse to my grandfather's, M. Gillenormand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire. No. 6, in the Marais.

By the light of the airhole Jean Valjean read these lines and stopped a moment as if absorbed in himself, repeating in an undertone: "Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6, M. Gillenormand." He replaced the pocket-book in Marius' pocket. He had eaten, strength had returned to him; he took Marius on his back again, laid his head carefully upon his right shoulder, and began to descend the sewer.

The Grand sewer, following the course of the valley of Ménilmontant, is almost two leagues in length. It is paved for a considerable part of its course.

This torch of the names of the streets of Paris with which we are illuminating Jean Valjean's subterranean advance for the reader Jean Valjean did not have. Nothing told him what zone of the city he was passing through or what route he had followed. Only the growing pallor of the gleams of light which he saw from time to time indicated that the sun was withdrawing from the pavement and that the day would soon be gone; and the rumbling of the wagons above his head, from continuous having become intermittent, then having almost ceased, he concluded that he was under central Paris no longer and that he was approaching some solitary region in the vicinity of the outer boulevards or the furthest quays. Where there are fewer houses and fewer streets the sewer has fewer airholes. The darkness thickened about Jean Valjean. He nonetheless continued to advance, groping in the obscurity.

This obscurity suddenly became terrible.



## V

FOR SAND AS WELL AS WOMAN THERE IS A FINESSE  
WHICH IS PERFDY

**H**E felt that he was entering the water and that he had under his feet pavement no longer, but mud.

It sometimes happens on certain coasts of Brittany or Scotland, that a man, traveler or fisherman, walking on the beach at low tide far from the bank, suddenly notices that for several minutes he has been walking with some difficulty. The sand beneath his feet is like pitch; his soles stick to it; it is sand no longer, it is glue. The beach is perfectly dry, but at every step he takes, as soon as he lifts his foot, the print which it leaves fills with water. The eye, however, has noticed no change; the immense strand is smooth and tranquil, all the sand has the same appearance; nothing distinguishes the surface which is solid from the surface which is no longer so; the joyous little cloud of sand-fleas continue to leap tumultuously over the wayfarer's feet. The man pursues his way, goes forward, inclines toward the land, endeavors to get nearer the upland. He is not anxious. Anxious about what? Only he feels somehow as if the weight of his feet increased with every step which he takes. Suddenly he sinks in. He sinks in two or three inches. Decidedly he is not on the right road; he stops to take his bearings. All at once he looks at his feet. His feet have disappeared. The sand covers them. He draws his feet out of the sand; he will retrace his steps; he turns back; he sinks in deeper. The sand comes up to his ankles; he pulls himself out and throws himself to the left; the sand is half-leg deep; he throws himself to the right; the sand comes up to his shins. Then he recognizes with unspeakable terror that he is caught in the quicksand, and that he has beneath him the fearful medium in which man can no more walk than the fish can swim. He throws off his load if he has one; he lightens himself like a ship in distress; it is already too late, the sand is above his knees.

He calls, he waves his hat or his handkerchief, the sand

gains on him more and more; if the beach is deserted, if the land is too far off, if the sandbank is of too ill repute, if there is no hero in sight, it is all over, he is condemned to enlizement. He is condemned to that appalling interment, long, infallible, implacable, impossible to slacken or to hasten, which endures for hours, which will not end, which seizes you erect, free and in full health, which draws you by the feet, which, at every effort that you attempt, at every shout that you utter, drags you a little deeper, which appears to punish you for your resistance by a redoubling of its grasp, which sinks the man slowly into the earth while it leaves him all the time to look at the horizon, the trees, the green fields, the smoke of the villages in the plain, the sails of the ships upon the sea, the birds flying and singing, the sunshine, the sky. Enlizement is the grave become a tide and rising from the depths of the earth toward a living man. Each minute is an inexorable enshrouddress. The victim attempts to sit down, to lie down, to creep; every movement he makes inters him; he straightens up, he sinks in; he feels that he is being swallowed up; he howls, implores, cries to the clouds, wrings his hands, despairs. Behold him waist deep in the sand; the sand reaches his breast, he is now only a bust. He raises his arms, utters furious groans, clutches the beach with his nails, would hold by that straw, leans upon his elbows to pull himself out of this soft sheath, sobs frenziedly. The sand rises; the sand reaches his shoulders, the sand reaches his neck; the face alone is visible now. The mouth cries, the sand fills it; silence. The eyes still gaze, the sand shuts them; night. Then the forehead decreases, a little hair flutters above the sand; a hand protrudes, comes through the surface of the beach, moves and shakes and disappears. Sinister effacement of a man.

Sometimes the horseman is enlized with his horse; sometimes the cartman is enlized with his cart; all horrible beneath the beach. It is a shipwreck elsewhere than in the water. It is the earth drowning man. The earth, filled with the ocean, becomes a trap. It presents itself as a plain and opens like a wave. Such treacheries has the abyss.

This fatal mishap, always possible upon one or another

coast of the sea, was also possible, thirty years ago, in the sewer of Paris.

Before the important works commenced in 1833, the subterranean system of Paris was subject to sudden sinkings of the bottom.

The water filtered into certain underlying, particularly friable, soils. The floor, which was of paving-stones, as in the old sewers, or of hydraulic cement upon concrete, as in the new galleries, having lost its support, bent. A bend in the floor of that kind is a crack, is a crumbling. The floor gave way over a certain space. This crevasse, a hiatus in a gulf of mud, was called technically *fontis*. What is a *fontis*? It is the quicksand of the seashore suddenly encountered underground; it is the beach of Mont St. Michel in a sewer. The diluted soil is, as it were, in fusion; all its molecules are in suspension in a soft medium; it is not land, and it is not water. Depth sometimes very great. Nothing more fearful than such a mischance. If the water predominates death is prompt, there is swallowing up; if the earth predominates death is slow, there is enlizement.

Can you picture to yourself such a death? If enlizement is terrible on the shore of the sea, what is it in the cloaca? Instead of the open air, the full light, the broad day, that clear horizon, those vast sounds, those free clouds whence rains life, those barks seen in the distance, that hope under every form, probable passers, succor possible until the last moment; instead of all that, deafness, blindness, a black arch, an interior of a tomb already prepared, death in the mire under a cover! the slow stifling by the filth, a stone box in which asphyxia opens its claws in the slime and takes you by the throat; fetidness mingled with the death-rattle; mire instead of sand, sulphuretted hydrogen instead of the hurricane, ordure instead of the ocean; and to call, and to gnash your teeth, and writhe, and struggle, and agonize, with that huge city above your head knowing nothing of it all!

Inexpressible horror of dying thus! Death sometimes redeems its atrocity by a certain terrible dignity. At the stake, in the shipwreck, man may be great; in the flame as in the foam a superb attitude is possible; you are transfigured while falling into that abyss. But not here. Death



is unclean. It is humiliating to expire. The last flitting visions are abject. Mire is synonymous with shame. It is mean, ugly, infamous. To die in a butt of Malmsey, like Clarence, so be it; in the scavenger's pit, like D'Escoubleau, that is horrible. To struggle within it is hideous; at the very time you are agonizing you are splashing. There is darkness enough for it to be hell and slime enough for it to be only a slough, and the dying man knows not whether he will become a spectre or a toad.

Everywhere else the grave is gloomy; here it is misshapen.

The depth of the fontis varied, as well as its length and its density, by reason of the more or less yielding character of the subsoil. Sometimes a fontis was three or four feet deep, sometimes eight or ten; sometimes no bottom could be found. The mire was here almost solid, there almost liquid. In the Lunière fontis it would have taken a man a day to disappear, while he would have been devoured in five minutes by the Phélippeaux slough. The mire bears more or less according to its greater or less density. A child escapes where a man is lost. The first law of safety is to divest yourself of every kind of burden. To throw away his bag of tools, or his basket or his hod, is the first thing that every sewerman does when he feels the soil giving way beneath him.

The fontis had various causes: friability of the soil; some crevasse at a depth beyond the reach of man; the violent showers of summer; the incessant storms of winter; the long, misty rains. Sometimes the weight of the neighboring houses upon a marly or sandy soil pressed out the arches of the subterranean galleries and made them yield, or it would happen that the floor gave way and cracked under this crushing pressure. The settling of the Pantheon obliterated in this manner, a century ago, a part of the excavations on Mount St. Geneviève. When a sewer sank beneath the pressure of the houses, the difficulty, on certain occasions, disclosed itself above in the street by a kind of saw-tooth separation in the pavement; this rent was developed in a serpentine line for the whole length of the cracked arch, and then, the evil being visible, the remedy could be prompt. It often happened also that the interior damage was not revealed by any exterior scar.

And, in that case, woe to the sewer-men. Entering without precaution into the sunken sewer, they might perish. The old registers make mention of some workmen who were buried in this way in the fontis. They give several names; among others that of the sewer-man who was engulfed in a sunken slough under the kennel on the Rue Carême Prenant, whose name was Blaise Pourtrain; this Blaise Pourtrain was brother of Nicholas Pourtrain, who was the last grave-digger of the cemetery called Charnier des Innocents in 1785, the date at which that cemetery died.

There was also that young and charming Vicomte d'Escoubleau, of whom we have spoken, one of the heroes of the siege of Lerida, where they gave the assault in silk stockings headed by violins. D'Escoubleau, surprised one night with his cousin, the Duchess de Sourdis, was drowned in a quagmire of the Beautreillis sewer, in which he had taken refuge to escape from the duke. Mme. de Sourdis, when his death was described to her, called for her smelling-bottle, and forgot to weep through much inhalation of salts. In such a case there is no love which persists; the cloaca extinguishes it. Hero refuses to wash Leander's corpse. Thisbe stops her nose at sight of Pyramus, and says: "Peugh!"

## VI

### THE FONTIS

**J**EAN VALJEAN found himself in presence of a fontis.

This kind of settling was then frequent in the subsoil of the Champs Elysées, very unfavorable for hydraulic works, and giving poor support to underground constructions from its excessive fluidity. This fluidity surpasses even that of the sands of the St. Georges quartier, which could only be overcome by stonework upon concrete, and the clayey beds infected with gas in the quartier of the martyrs, so liquid that the passage could be effected under the gallery of the martyrs only by means of a metallic tube. When, in 1836, they demolished, for the purpose of rebuilding, the old stone sewer under the Faubourg St. Honoré, in which we find Jean Valjean now entangled,

the quicksand, which is the subsoil from the Champs Elysées to the Seine, was such an obstacle that the work lasted nearly six months, to the great outcry of the bordering proprietors, especially the proprietors of hotels and coaches. The work was more than difficult; it was dangerous. It is true that there were four months and a half of rain, and three risings of the Seine.

The fontis which Jean Valjean fell upon was caused by the showers of the previous day. A yielding of the pavement, imperfectly upheld by the underlying sand, had occasioned a damming of the rain-water. Infiltration having taken place, sinking had followed. The floor, broken up, had disappeared in the mire. For what distance? Impossible to say. The obscurity was deeper than anywhere else. It was a mudhole in the cavern of night.

Jean Valjean felt the pavement slipping away under him. He entered into this slime. It was water on the surface, mire at the bottom. He must surely pass through. To retrace his steps was impossible. Marius was expiring and Jean Valjean exhausted. Where else could he go? Jean Valjean advanced. Moreover, the quagmire appeared not very deep for a few steps. But in proportion as he advanced his feet sank in. He very soon had the mire half-knee deep and water above his knees. He walked on, holding Marius with both arms as high above the water as he could. The mud now came up to his knees and the water to his waist. He could no longer turn back. He sank in deeper and deeper. This mire, dense enough for one man's weight, evidently could not bear two. Marius and Jean Valjean would have had a chance of escape separately. Jean Valjean continued to advance, supporting this dying man, who was perhaps a corpse.

The water came up to his armpits; he felt that he was foundering; it was with difficulty that he could move in the depth of mire in which he was. The density, which was the support, was also the obstacle. He still held Marius up, and, with an unparalleled outlay of strength, he advanced; but he sank deeper. He now had only his head out of the water and his arms supporting Marius. There is, in the old pictures of the deluge, a mother doing thus with her child.

He sank still deeper; he threw his face back to escape



the water and to be able to breathe; he who should have seen him in this obscurity would have thought he saw a mask floating upon the darkness; he dimly perceived Marius' drooping head and livid face above him; he made a desperate effort and thrust his foot forward; his foot struck something solid; a support. It was time.

He rose and writhed and rooted himself upon this support with a sort of fury. It produced the effect upon him of the first step of a staircase reascending toward life.

This support, discovered in the mire at the last moment, was the beginning of the other slope of the floor, which had bent without breaking, and had curved beneath the water like a board and in a single piece. A well-constructed paving forms an arch and has this firmness. This fragment of the floor, partly submerged, but solid, was a real slope, and, once upon this slope, they were saved. Jean Valjean ascended this inclined plane and reached the other side of the quagmire.

On coming out of the water he struck against a stone and fell upon his knees. This seemed to him fitting, and he remained thus for some time, his soul lost in unspoken prayer to God.

He rose, shivering, chilled, infected, bending beneath this dying man, whom he was dragging on, all dripping with slime, his soul filled with a strange light.

## VII

SOMETIMES WE GET AGROUND WHEN WE EXPECT TO GET  
ASHORE

HE resumed his route once more. However, if he had not left his life in the fontis, he seemed to have left his strength. This supreme effort had exhausted him. His exhaustion was so great, that every three or four steps he was obliged to take breath and lean against the wall. Once he had to sit down upon the curb to change Marius' position, and he thought he should stay there. But if his vigor was dead his energy was not. He rose again.

He walked with desperation, almost with rapidity, for

one hundred paces without raising his head, almost without breathing, and suddenly struck against the wall. He had reached an angle of the sewer, and, arriving at the turn with his head down, he had encountered the wall. He raised his eyes, and at the extremity of the passage, down there before him, far, very far away, he perceived a light. This time it was not the terrible light; it was the good and white light. It was the light of day.

Jean Valjean saw the outlet.

A condemned soul who, from the midst of the furnace, should suddenly perceive an exit from Gehenna, would feel what Jean Valjean felt. It would fly frantically with the stumps of its burned wings toward the radiant door. Jean Valjean felt exhaustion no more, he felt Marius' weight no longer, he found again his knees of steel, he ran rather than walked. As he approached, the outlet assumed more and more distinct outline. It was a circular arch, not so high as the vault, which sank down by degrees, and not so wide as the gallery, which narrowed as the top grew lower. The tunnel ended on the inside in the form of a funnel; a vicious contraction, copied from the wickets of houses of detention, logical in a prison, illogical in a sewer, and which has since been corrected.

Jean Valjean reached the outlet.

There he stopped.

It was, indeed, the outlet, but it did not let him out.

The arch was closed by a strong grating, and the grating, which, according to all appearance, rarely turned upon its rusty hinges, was held in its stone frame by a stout lock, which, red with rust, seemed an enormous brick. He could see the keyhole, and the strong bolt deeply plunged into the iron staple. The lock was plainly a double-lock. It was one of those Bastille locks of which the old Paris was so lavish.

Beyond the grating the open air, the river, the daylight, the beach, very narrow, but sufficient to get away. The distant quays, Paris, that gulf in which one is so easily lost, the wide horizon, liberty. He distinguished at his right, below him, the Pont d'Iéna, and at his left, above, the Pont des Invalides; the spot would have been propitious for awaiting night and escaping. It was one of the most solitary points in Paris, the beach which fronts on

the Gros Caillou. The flies came in and went out through the bars of the grating.

It might have been 8:30 o'clock in the evening. The day was declining.

Jean Valjean laid Marius along the wall on the dry part of the floor, then walked to the grating and clinched the bars with both hands; the shaking was frenzied, the shock nothing. The grating did not stir. Jean Valjean seized the bars one after another, hoping to be able to tear out the least solid one, and to make a lever of it to lift the door or break the lock. Not a bar yielded. A tiger's teeth are not more solid in their sockets. No lever; no possible purchase. The obstacle was invincible. No means of opening the door.

Must he, then, perish there? What should he do? what would become of them? go back; recommence the terrible road which he had already traversed; he had not the strength. Besides, how cross that quagmire again, from which he had escaped only by a miracle? And after the quagmire, was there not that police patrol from which, certainly, one would not escape twice? And then where should he go? what direction take? to follow the descent was not to reach the goal. Should he come to another outlet he would find it obstructed by a door or a grating. All the outlets were undoubtedly closed in this way. Chance had unsealed the grating by which they had entered, but evidently all the other mouths of the sewer were fastened. He had only succeeded in escaping into a prison.

It was over. All that Jean Valjean had done was useless. Exhaustion ended in abortion.

They were both caught in the gloomy and immense web of death, and Jean Valjean felt running over those black threads, trembling in the darkness, the appalling spider.

He turned his back to the grating and dropped upon the pavement, rather prostrate than sitting, beside the yet motionless Marius, and his head sank between his knees. No exit. This was the last drop of anguish.

Of whom did he think in this overwhelming dejection? Neither of himself nor of Marius. He thought of Cosette.



## VIII

## THE TORN COAT-TAIL

**I**N the midst of this annihilation a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a voice which spoke low said to him: "Go halves."

Somebody in that darkness? Nothing is so like a dream as despair, Jean Valjean thought he was dreaming. He had heard no steps. Was it possible? He raised his eyes.

A man was before him.

This man was dressed in a blouse; he was barefooted; he held his shoes in his left hand; he had evidently taken them off to be able to reach Jean Valjean without being heard.

Jean Valjean had not a moment's hesitation. Unforeseen as was the encounter, this man was known to him. This man was Thenardier.

Although awakened, so to speak, with a start, Jean Valjean, accustomed to be on the alert and on the watch for unexpected blows which he must quickly parry, instantly regained possession of all his presence of mind. Besides, the condition of affairs could not be worse, a certain degree of distress is no longer capable of crescendo, and Thenardier himself could not add to the blackness of this night.

There was a moment of delay.

Thenardier, lifting his right hand to the height of his forehead, shaded his eyes with it, then brought his brows together while he winked his eyes, which, with a slight pursing of the mouth, characterizes the sagacious attention of a man who is seeking to recognize another. He did not succeed. Jean Valjean, we have just said, turned his back to the light, and was, moreover, so disfigured, so muddy and so bloodstained, that in full noon he would have been unrecognizable. On the other hand, with the light from the grating shining in his face, a cellar light, it is true, livid, but precise in its lividness, Thenardier, as the energetic trite metaphor expresses it, struck Jean Valjean at once. This inequality of conditions was enough to

ensure Jean Valjean some advantage in this mysterious duel which was about to open between the two conditions and the two men. The encounter took place between Jean Valjean veiled and Thenardier unmasked.

Jean Valjean perceived immediately that Thenardier did not recognize him.

They gazed at each other for a moment in this penumbra, as if they were taking each other's measure. Thenardier was first to break the silence.

"How are you going to manage to get out?"

Jean Valjean did not answer.

Thenardier continued:

"Impossible to pick the lock. Still you must get away from here."

"That's true," said Jean Valjean.

"Well, go halves."

"What do you mean?"

"You have killed the man; very well. For my part, I have the key."

Thenardier pointed to Marius. He went on:

"I don't know you, but I would like to help you. You must be a friend."

Jean Valjean began to understand. Thenardier took him for an assassin.

Thenardier resumed:

"Listen, comrade. You haven't killed this man without looking to see what he had in his pockets. Give me my half. I will open the door for you."

And, drawing a big key half out from under his blouse, which was full of holes, he added:

"Would you like to see how the key of the fields is made? There it is."

Jean Valjean "remained stupid"—the expression is the elder Corneille's—so far as to doubt whether what he saw was real. It was Providence appearing in a guise of horror, and the good angel springing out of the ground in the form of Thenardier.

Thenardier plunged his fist into a huge pocket hidden under his blouse, pulled out a rope and handed it to Jean Valjean.

"Here," said he, "I'll give you the rope to boot."

"A rope, what for?"

"You want a stone, too, but you'll find one outside. There is a heap of rubbish there."

"A stone, what for?"

"Fool, as you are going to throw the *pantré* into the river, you want a stone and a rope; without them it would float on the water."

Jean Valjean took the rope. Everybody has accepted things mechanically.

Thenardier snapped his fingers as over the arrival of a sudden idea:

"Ah, now, comrade, how did you manage to get out of the quagmire yonder? I haven't dared to risk myself there. Peugh! you don't smell good."

After a pause he added:

"I ask you questions, but you are right in not answering them. That is an apprenticeship for the examining judge's cursed quarter of an hour. And then by not speaking at all you run no risk of speaking too loud. It is all the same, because I don't see your face, and because I don't know your name, you would do wrong to suppose that I don't know who you are and what you want. Understood. You have smashed this gentleman a little; now you want to squeeze him somewhere. You need the river, the great hide-folly. I am going to get you out of the scrape. To help a good fellow in trouble, that puts my boots on."

While approving Jean Valjean for keeping silence, he was evidently seeking to make him speak. He pushed his shoulders so as to endeavor to see his side-face, and exclaimed, without, however, rising above the moderate tone in which he kept his voice:

"Speaking of the quagmire, you are a proud animal. Why didn't you throw the man in there?"

Jean Valjean preserved silence.

Thenardier resumed, raising the rag which served him as a cravat up to his Adam's apple, a gesture which completes the air of sagacity of a serious man:

"Indeed, perhaps, you have acted prudently. The workmen, when they come to-morrow to stop the hole, would certainly have found the *pantinois* forgotten there, and they would have been able, thread by thread, straw by straw, to *pincer* the trace and to reach you. Something



has passed through the sewer. Who? Where did he come out? Did anybody see him come out? The police has plenty of brains. The sewer is treacherous and informs against you. Such a discovery is a rarity; it attracts attention; few people use the sewer in their business, while the river is at everybody's service. The river is the true grave. At the month's end they fish you up the man at the nets of St. Cloud. Well, what does that amount to? It is a carcass, indeed! Who killed this man? Paris. And justice don't even inquire into it. You have done right."

The more loquacious Thenardier was the more dumb was Jean Valjean. Thenardier pushed his shoulder anew.

"Now, let us finish the business. Let us divide. You have seen my key; show me your money."

Thenardier was haggard, tawny, equivocal, a little threatening, nevertheless friendly.

There was one strange circumstance: Thenardier's manner was not natural; he did not appear entirely at his ease; while he did not affect an air of mystery, he talked low; from time to time he laid his finger on his mouth and muttered: "Hush!" It was difficult to guess why. There was nobody there but them. Jean Valjean thought that perhaps some other bandits were hidden in some recess not far off, and that Thenardier did not care to share with them.

Thenardier resumed:

"Let us finish. How much did the *pantre* have in his deeps?"

Jean Valjean felt in his pockets.

It was, as will be remembered, his custom to have money about him. The gloomy life of expedients to which he was condemned made this a law to him. This time, however, he was caught unprovided. On putting on his national guard's uniform the evening before, he had forgotten, gloomily absorbed as he was, to take his pocket-book with him. He had only some coins in his waistcoat pocket. He turned out his pocket all soaked with filth, and displayed upon the curb of the sewer a louis d'or, two five-franc pieces, and five or six big sous.

Thenardier thrust out his under-lip with a significant twist of the neck.

"You didn't kill him very dear," said he.

He began to handle, in all familiarity, the pockets of Jean Valjean and Marius. Jean Valjean, principally concerned in keeping his back to the light, did not interfere with him. While he was feeling in Marius' coat, Thenardier, with the dexterity of a juggler, found means, without attracting Jean Valjean's attention, to tear off a strip, which he hid under his blouse, probably thinking that this scrap of cloth might assist him afterward to identify the assassinated man and the assassin. He found, however, nothing more than the thirty francs.

"It is true," said he, "both together you have no more than that."

And, forgetting his words, *go halves*, he took the whole.

He hesitated a little before the big sous. Upon reflection he took them also, mumbling:

"No matter! this is to *suriner* people too cheap."

This said he took the key from under his blouse anew.

"Now, friend, you must go out. This is like the fair, you pay on going out. You have paid, go out."

And he began to laugh.

That he had, in extending to an unknown man the help of this key, and in causing another man than himself to go out by this door, the pure and disinterested intention of saving an assassin is something which is permissible to doubt.

Thenardier helped Jean Valjean to replace Marius upon his shoulders; then he went toward the grating upon the points of his bare feet, beckoning to Jean Valjean to follow him; he looked outside, laid his finger on his mouth and stood a few seconds as if in suspense; the inspection over, he put the key into the lock. The bolt slid and the door turned. There was neither snapping nor grinding. It was done very quietly. It was plain that this grating and its hinges, oiled with care, were opened oftener than would have been guessed. This quiet was ominous; you felt in it the furtive goings and comings, the silent entrances and exits of the men of the night and the wolf-like tread of crime. The sewer was evidently in complicity with some mysterious band. This taciturn grating was a receiver.

Thenardier half-opened the door, left just a passage

for Jean Valjean, closed the grating again, turned the key twice in the lock, and plunged back into the obscurity, without making more noise than a breath. He seemed to walk with the velvet paws of a tiger. A moment afterward this hideous providence had entered again into the invisible.

Jean Valjean found himself outside.

## IX

MARIUS SEEMS TO BE DEAD TO ONE WHO IS A GOOD JUDGE

**H**E let Marius slide down upon the beach.  
They were outside!

The miasmas, the obscurity, the horror, were behind him. The balmy air, pure, living, joyful, freely respirable, flowed around him. Everywhere about him silence, but the charming silence of a sunset in a clear sky. Twilight had fallen; night was coming, the great liberatress, the friend of all those who need a mantle of darkness to escape from an anguish. The sky extended on every side like an enormous calm. The river came to his feet with the sound of a kiss. He heard the airy dialogues of the nests bidding each other good-night in the elm trees of the Champs Elysées. A few stars, faintly piercing the pale blue of the zenith, and visible to reverie alone, produced their imperceptible little resplendencies in the immensity. Evening was unfolding over Jean Valjean's head all the caresses of the infinite.

It was the undecided and exquisite hour which says neither yes nor no. There was already night enough for one to be lost in it at a little distance, and still day enough for one to be recognized near at hand.

Jean Valjean was for a few seconds irresistibly overcome by all this august and caressing serenity; there are such moments of forgetfulness; suffering refuses to harass the wretched; all is eclipsed in thought; peace covers the dreamer like a night; and, under the twilight which is flinging forth its rays, and in imitation of the sky which is illuminating, the soul becomes starry. Jean Valjean could not but gaze at that vast clear shadow which was above him; pensive, he took in the majestic silence of the



eternal heavens, a bath of ecstasy and prayer. Then, hastily, as if a feeling of duty came to him, he bent over Marius, and, dipping up some water in the hollow of his hand, he threw a few drops gently into his face. Marius' eyelids did not part; but his half-open mouth breathed.

Jean Valjean was plunging his hand into the river again, when suddenly he felt an indescribable uneasiness, such as we feel when we have somebody behind us, without seeing him.

We have already referred elsewhere to this impression, with which everybody is acquainted.

He turned round.

As just before, somebody was indeed behind him.

A man of tall stature, wrapped in a long overcoat, with folded arms, and holding in his right hand a club, the leaden knob of which could be seen, stood erect a few steps in the rear of Jean Valjean, who was stooping over Marius.

It was, with the aid of the shadow, a sort of apparition. A simple man would have been afraid on account of the twilight, and a reflective man on account of the club.

Jean Valjean recognized Javert.

The reader has doubtless guessed that Thenardier's pursuer was none other than Javert. Javert, after his unhoped-for departure from the barricade, had gone to the prefecture of police, had given an account verbally to the prefect in person in a short audience, had then immediately returned to his duty, which implied—the note found upon him will be remembered—a certain surveillance of the shore on the right bank of the Champs Elysées, which for some time had excited the attention of the police. There he had seen Thenardier, and had followed him. The rest is known.

It is understood also that the opening of that grating so obligingly before Jean Valjean was a piece of shrewdness on the part of Thenardier. Thenardier felt that Javert was still there; the man who is watched has a scent which does not deceive him; a bone must be thrown to this hound. An assassin, what a godsend! It was the scapegoat, which must never be refused. Thenardier, by putting Jean Valjean out in his place, gave a victim to the police, threw them off his own track, caused himself to be forgotten in a larger matter rewarding Javert for his delay, which always

flatters a spy, gained thirty francs, and counted surely, as for himself, upon escaping by the aid of this diversion.

Jean Valjean had passed from one shoal to another.

These two encounters, blow on blow, to fall from Thénardier upon Javert, it was hard.

Javert did not recognize Jean Valjean, who, as we have said, no longer resembled himself. He did not unfold his arms, he secured his club in his grasp by an imperceptible movement, and said in a quick and calm voice:

“Who are you?”

“I.”

“What you?”

“Jean Valjean.”

Javert put the club between his teeth, bent his knees, inclined his body, laid his two powerful hands upon Jean Valjean’s shoulders, which they clasped like two vises, examined him, and recognized him. Their faces almost touched. Javert’s look was terrible.

Jean Valjean stood inert under the grasp of Javert like a lion who should submit to the claw of a lynx.

“Inspector Javert,” said he, “you have got me. Besides, since this morning, I have considered myself your prisoner. I did not give you my address to try to escape you. Take me. Only grant me one thing.”

Javert seemed not to hear. He rested his fixed eye upon Jean Valjean. His rising chin pushed his lips toward his nose, a sign of savage reverie. At last he let go of Jean Valjean, rose up as straight as a stick, took his club firmly in his grasp, and, as if in a dream, murmured rather than pronounced this question:

“What are you doing here? and who is this man?”

Jean Valjean answered, and the sound of his voice appeared to awaken Javert:

“It is precisely of him that I wish to speak. Dispose of me as you please; but help me first to carry him home. I only ask that of you.”

Javert’s face contracted, as it happened to him whenever anybody seemed to consider him capable of a concession. Still he did not say no.

He stooped down again, took a handkerchief from his pocket, which he dipped in the water, and wiped Marius’ bloodstained forehead.

"This man was in the barricade," said he in an undertone, and as if speaking to himself. "This is he whom they called Marius."

A spy of the first quality, who had observed everything, listened to everything, heard everything, and recollected everything, believing he was about to die; who spied even in his death agony, and who, leaning upon the first step of the grave, had taken notes.

He seized Marius' hand, seeking for his pulse.

"He is wounded," said Jean Valjean.

"He is dead," said Javert.

Jean Valjean answered:

"No. Not yet."

"You have brought him, then, from the barricade here?" observed Javert.

His preoccupation must have been deep, as he did not dwell longer upon this perplexing escape through the sewer, and did not even notice Jean Valjean's silence after his question.

Jean Valjean, for his part, seemed to have but one idea. He resumed:

"He lives in the Marais, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, at his grandfather's—I forget the name."

Jean Valjean felt in Marius' coat, took out the pocket-book, opened it at the page penciled by Marius and handed it to Javert.

There was still enough light floating in the air to enable one to read. Javert, moreover, had in his eye the feline phosphorescence of the birds of the night. He deciphered the few lines written by Marius, and muttered: "Gille-normand, Rue des Filles du Calvaire, No. 6."

Then he cried: "Driver!"

The reader will remember the fiacre which was waiting, in case of need.

Javert kept Marius' pocket-book.

A moment later, the carriage, descending by the slope of the watering-place, was on the beach. Marius was laid upon the back seat, and Javert sat down by the side of Jean Valjean on the front seat.

When the door was shut the fiacre moved rapidly off, going up the quays in the direction of the Bastille.

They left the quays and entered the streets. The driver,



a black silhouette upon his box, whipped up his bony horses. Icy silence in the coach. Marius, motionless, his body braced in the corner of the carriage, his head dropping upon his breast, his arms hanging, his legs rigid, appeared to await nothing now but a coffin; Jean Valjean seemed made of shadow and Javert of stone; and in that carriage full of night, the interior of which, whenever it passed before a lamp, appeared to turn lividly pale, as if from an intermittent flash, chance grouped together, and seemed dismally to confront the three tragic immobilities, the corpse, the spectre, and the statue.

## X

## RETURN OF THE SON PRODIGAL OF HIS LIFE

AT every jolt over the pavement a drop of blood fell from Marius' hair.

It was after nightfall when the fiacre arrived at No. 6, in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire.

Javert first set foot to the ground, verified by a glance the number above the *porte-cochère*, and, lifting the heavy wrought-iron knocker, embellished in the old fashion, with a goat and a satyr defying each other, struck a violent blow. The fold of the door partially opened and Javert pushed it. The porter showed himself, gaping and half-awake, a candle in his hand.

Everybody in the house was asleep. People go to bed early in the Marais, especially on days of émeute. That good old quartier, startled by the Revolution, takes refuge in slumber, as children, when they hear Bugaboo coming, hide their heads very quickly under the coverlets.

Meanwhile Jean Valjean and the driver lifted Marius out of the coach, Jean Valjean supporting him by the armpits and the coachman by the knees.

While he was carrying Marius in this way Jean Valjean slipped his hands under his clothes, which were much torn, felt his breast and assured himself that the heart still beat. It beat even a little less feebly, as if the motion of the carriage had determined a certain renewal of life.

Javert called out to the porter in the tone which befits the government, in presence of the porter of a factious man:

"Somebody whose name is Gillenormand?"

"It is here. What do you want with him?"

"His son is brought home."

"His son?" said the porter with amazement.

"He is dead."

Jean Valjean, who came ragged and dirty behind Javert, and whom the porter beheld with some horror, motioned to him with his head that he was not.

The porter did not appear to understand either Javert's words or Jean Valjean's signs.

Javert continued:

"He had been to the barricade, and here he is."

"To the barricade!" exclaimed the porter.

"He has got himself killed. Go and wake his father."

The porter did not stir.

"Why don't you go?" resumed Javert.

And he added:

"There will be a funeral here to-morrow."

With Javert the common incidents of the highways were classed categorically, which is the foundation of prudence and vigilance, and each contingency had its compartment; the possible facts were in some sort in the drawers, whence they came out on occasion in variable quantities; there were in the street riot, émeute, carnival, funeral.

The porter merely woke Basque; Basque woke Nicolette; Nicolette woke Aunt Gillenormand. As to the grandfather, they let him sleep, thinking that he would know it soon enough, at all events.

They carried Marius up to the first story without anybody, moreover, perceiving it in the other portions of the house, and they laid him on an old couch in M. Gillenormand's ante-chamber; and while Basque went for a doctor, and Nicolette was opening the linen closets, Jean Valjean felt Javert touch him on the shoulder. He understood and went downstairs, having behind him Javert's following steps.

The porter saw them depart as he had seen them arrive, with drowsy dismay.

They got into the fiacre again, and the driver mounted upon his box.

"Inspector Javert," said Jean Valjean, "grant me one thing more."

"What?" asked Javert roughly.

"Let me go home a moment. Then you shall do with me what you will."

Javert remained silent for a few seconds, his chin drawn back into the collar of his overcoat, then he let down the window in front.

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

## XI

### COMMOTION IN THE ABSOLUTE

THEY did not open their mouths again for the whole distance.

What did Jean Valjean desire? To finish what he had begun; to inform Cosette, to tell her where Marius was, to give her perhaps some other useful information, to make, if he could, certain final dispositions. As to himself, as to what concerned him personally, it was all over; he had been seized by Javert and did not resist; another than he in such a condition would perhaps have thought vaguely of that rope which Thenardier had given him and of the bars of the first cell which he should enter; but, since the bishop, there had been in Jean Valjean, in view of any violent attempt, were it even upon his own life, let us repeat, a deep religious hesitation.

Suicide, that mysterious assault upon the unknown, which may contain, in a certain measure, the death of the soul, was impossible to Jean Valjean.

At the entrance of the Rue de l'Homme Armé, the fiacre stopped, this street being too narrow for carriages to enter. Javert and Jean Valjean got out.

The driver humbly represented to "M. l'Inspector" that the Utrecht velvet of his carriage was all stained with the blood of the assassinated man and with the mud of the assassin. That was what he had understood. He added that an indemnity was due to him. At the same time, taking his little book from his pocket, he begged M. l'Inspector to have the goodness to write him "a little scrap of certificate as to what."

Javert pushed back the little book which the driver handed him, and said:



"How much must you have, including your stop and your trip?"

"It is seven hours and a quarter," answered the driver, "and my velvet was brand new. Eighty francs, M. l'Inspector."

Javert took four napoleons from his pocket and dismissed the fiacre.

Jean Valjean thought that Javert's intention was to take him on foot to the post of the Blancs-Manteaux or to the post of the Archives, which are quite near by.

They entered the street. It was, as usual, empty. Javert followed Jean Valjean. They reached No. 7. Jean Valjean rapped. The door opened.

"Very well," said Javert. "Go up."

He added with a strange expression, and as if he were making an effort in speaking in such a way:

"I will wait here for you."

Jean Valjean looked at Javert. This manner of proceeding was little in accordance with Javert's habits. Still, that Javert should now have a sort of haughty confidence in him, the confidence of the cat which grants the mouse the liberty of the length of her claw, resolved as Jean Valjean was to deliver himself up and make an end of it, could not surprise him very much. He opened the door, went into the house, cried to the porter who was in bed, and who had drawn the cord without getting up: "It is I!" and mounted the stairs.

On reaching the first story, he paused. All painful paths have their halting-places. The window on the landing, which was a sliding window, was open. As in many old houses, the stairway admitted the light, and had a view upon the street. The street lamp, which stood exactly opposite, threw some rays upon the stairs, which produced an economy in light.

Jean Valjean, either to take breath or mechanically, looked out of this window. He leaned over the street. It is short, and the lamp lighted it from one end to the other. Jean Valjean was bewildered with amazement; there was nobody there.

Javert was gone.

## XII

## THE GRANDFATHER

**B**ASQUE and the porter had carried Marius into the parlor, still stretched motionless upon the couch on which he had been first laid. The doctor, who had been sent for, had arrived. Aunt Gillenormand had got up.

Aunt Gillenormand went to and fro in terror, clasping her hands, and incapable of doing anything but to say: "My God, is it possible?" She added, at intervals: "Everything will be covered with blood!" When the first horror was over, a certain philosophy of the situation dawned upon her mind, and expressed itself by this exclamation: "It must have turned out this way!" She did not attain to: "I always said just so!" which is customary on occasions of this kind.

On the doctor's order a cot-bed had been set up near the couch. The doctor examined Marius, and, after having determined that the pulse still beat, that the sufferer had no wound penetrating his breast, and that the blood at the corners of his mouth came from the nasal cavities, he had him laid flat upon the bed, without a pillow, his head on a level with his body, and even a little lower, with his chest bare, in order to facilitate respiration. Mdle. Gillenormand, seeing that they were taking off Marius' clothes, withdrew. She began to tell her beads in her room.

The body had not received any interior lesion; a ball, deadened by the pocket-book, had turned aside, and made the tour of the ribs with a hideous gash, but not deep, and consequently not dangerous. The long walk underground had completed the dislocation of the broken shoulder-blade; and there were serious difficulties there. There were sword-cuts on the arms. No scar disfigured his face; the head, however, was, as it were, covered with hacks; what would be the result of these wounds on the head? did they stop at the scalp? did they affect the skull? That could not yet be told. A serious symptom was, that they had caused the fainting, and men do not always wake from such faintings. The hemorrhage, moreover, had ex-

hausted the wounded man. From the waist, the lower part of the body had been protected by the barricade.

Basque and Nicolette tore up linen and made bandages; Nicolette sewed them, Basque folded them. There being no lint, the doctor stopped the flow of blood from the wounds temporarily with rolls of wadding. By the side of the bed three candles were burning on a table upon which the surgical instruments were spread out. The doctor washed Marius' face and hair with cold water. A bucketful was red in a moment. The porter, candle in hand, stood by.

The physician seemed reflecting sadly. From time to time he shook his head as if he were answering some question which he had put to himself internally. A bad sign for the patient, these mysterious dialogues of the physician with himself.

At the moment the doctor was wiping the face and touching the still closed eyelids lightly with his finger, a door opened at the rear end of the parlor, and a long, pale figure approached.

It was the grandfather.

The émeute, for two days, had very much agitated, exasperated, and absorbed M. Gillenormand. He had not slept during the preceding night, and he had had a fever all day. At night he had gone to bed very early, recommending that everything in the house be bolted, and, from fatigue, he had fallen asleep.

The slumbers of old men are easily broken; M. Gillenormand's room was next the parlor, and, in spite of the precautions they had taken, the noise had awakened him. Surprised by the light which he saw at the crack of his door, he had got out of bed and groped his way along.

He was on the threshold, one hand on the knob of the half-opened door, his head bent a little forward and shaking, his body wrapped in a white nightgown, straight and without folds, like a shroud; he was astounded; and he had the appearance of a phantom who is looking into a tomb.

He perceived the bed, and on the mattress that bleeding young man, white with a waxy whiteness, his eyes closed, his mouth open, his lips pallid, naked to the waist, gashed everywhere with red wounds, motionless, brightly lighted.

The grandfather had from head to foot as much of a



shiver as ossified limbs can have; his eyes, the cornea of which had become yellow from his great age, were veiled with a sort of glassy haze; his whole face assumed in an instant the cadaverous angles of a skeleton head, his arms fell pendent as if a spring had broken in them, and his stupefied astonishment was expressed by the separation of the fingers of his aged, tremulous hands; his knees bent forward, showing through the opening of his nightgown his poor, naked legs bristling with white hairs, and he murmured:

"Marius!"

"Monsieur," said Basque, "monsieur has just been brought home. He has been to the barricade, and—"

"He is dead!" cried the old man, in a terrible voice. "Oh, the brigand!"

Then a sort of sepulchral transfiguration made this centenarian as straight as a young man.

"Monsieur," said he, "you are the doctor. Come, tell me one thing. He is dead, isn't he?"

The physician, in the height of anxiety, kept silence.

M. Gillenormand wrung his hands with a terrible burst of laughter.

"He is dead! he is dead! He has got killed at the barricade, in hatred of me! It is against me that he did this! Ah, the blood-drinker! This is the way he comes back to me! Misery of my life, he is dead!"

He went to a window, opened it wide as if he were stifling, and standing before the shadow, he began to talk into the street to the night:

"Pierced, sabred, slaughtered, exterminated, slashed, cut in pieces! do you see that, the vagabond! He knew very well that I was waiting for him, and that I had had his room arranged for him and that I had had this portrait of the time when he was a little boy hung at the head of my bed! He knew very well that he had only to come back, and that for years I had been calling him, and that I sat at night in my chimney corner with my hands on my knees, not knowing what to do, and that I was a fool for his sake! You knew it very well that you had only to come in and say: 'It is I,' and that you would be the master of the house, and that I would obey you, and that you would do whatever you liked with your old

booby of a grandfather. You knew it very well, and you said: 'No, he is a royalist; I won't go!' And you went to the barricades, and you got yourself killed out of spite; to revenge yourself for what I said to you about the Duke de Berry. That is infamous! Go to bed, then, and sleep quietly! He is dead! That is my waking."

The physician, who began to be anxious on two accounts, left Marius a moment, and went to M. Gillenormand and took his arm. The grandfather turned round, looked at him with eyes which seemed swollen and bloody, and said, quietly:

"Monsieur, I thank you. I am calm, I am a man, I saw the death of Louis XVI, I know how to bear up under events. There is one thing which is terrible, to think that it is your newspapers that do all the harm. You will have scribblers, talkers, lawyers, orators, tribunes, discussions, progress, lights, rights of man, freedom of the press, and this is the way they bring home your children for you. Oh! Marius! it is abominable! Killed! dead before me! A barricade! Oh! the bandit! Doctor, you live in the quartier, I believe? Oh! I know you well. I see your carriage pass from my window. I am going to tell you. You would be wrong to think I am angry. We don't get angry with a dead man; that would be stupid. That is a child I brought up. I was an old man when he was yet quite small. He played at the Tuileries with his little spade and his little chair, and, so that the keeper should not scold, with my cane I filled up the holes in the ground that he made with his spade. One day he cried: 'Down with Louis XVIII!' and went away. It is not my fault. He was all rosy and fair. His mother is dead. Have you noticed that all little children are fair? What is the reason of it? He is the son of one of those brigands of the Loire; but children are innocent of the crimes of their fathers. I remember when he was as high as this. He could not pronounce the *d's*. His talk was so soft and so obscure that you would have thought it was a bird. I recollect that once, before the Farnese Hercules, they made a circle to admire and wonder at him, that child was so beautiful! It was such a head as you see in pictures. I spoke to him in my gruff voice, I frightened him with my cane, but he knew very well it was for fun. In the morn-

ing, when he came into my room, I scolded, but it seemed like sunshine to me. You can't defend yourself against these brats. They take you, they hold on to you, they never let go of you. The truth is that there was never any amour like that child. Now, what do you say of your Lafayette, your Benjamin Constant, and of your Tirecuir de Cérnelles, who kill him for me? It can't go on like this."

He approached Marius, who was still livid and motionless, and to whom the physician had returned, and he began to wring his hands. The old man's white lips moved as if mechanically, and made way for almost indistinct words, like whispers in a death-rattle, which could scarcely be heard: "Oh! heartless! Oh! clubbist! Oh! scoundrel! Oh! Septembrist!" Reproaches whispered by a dying man to a corpse.

Little by little, as internal eruptions must always make their way out, the connection of his words returned, but the grandfather appeared to have lost the strength to utter them, his voice was so dull and faint that it seemed to come from the other side of an abyss.

"It is all the same to me, I am going to die, too, myself. And to say that there is no little creature in Paris who would have been glad to make the wretch happy! A rascal who, instead of amusing himself and enjoying life, went to fight and got himself riddled like a brute! And for whom? For what? For the Republic! Instead of going to dance at the Chaumière, as young people should. It is well worth being twenty years old. The Republic, a deuced fine folly! Poor mothers, raise your pretty boys, then. Come, he is dead. That will make two funerals under the *porte-cochère*. Then you fixed yourself out like that for the fine eyes of General Lamarque! What has he done for you, this General Lamarque? A sabrer! a babbler! To get killed for a dead man! If it isn't enough to make a man crazy! Think of it! At twenty! And without turning his head to see if he was not leaving somebody behind him! Here now are the poor old good men who must die alone. Perish in your corner, owl! Well, indeed, so much the better, it is what I was hoping, it is going to kill me dead. I am too old, I am 100, I am 100,000; it is a long time since I have had a right to be dead. With



this blow it is done. It is all over, then, how lucky! What is the use of making him breathe hartshorn and all this heap of drugs? You are losing your pains, dolt of a doctor! Go along, he is dead, stone dead. I understand it; I, who am dead also. He hasn't done the thing half-way. Yes, these times are infamous, infamous, infamous, and that is what I think of you, of your ideas, of your systems, of your masters, of your oracles, of your doctors, of your scamps of writers, of your beggars of philosophers, and of all the revolutions which for sixty years have frightened the flocks of crows in the Tuileries! And, as you had no pity in getting yourself killed like that, I shall not have even any grief for your death, do you understand, assassin?"

At this moment Marius slowly raised his lids, and his gaze, still veiled in the astonishment of lethargy, rested upon M. Gillenormand.

"Marius!" cried the old man. "Marius! my darling Marius! My child! My dear son! You are opening your eyes, you are looking at me, you are alive, thanks!"

And he fell, fainting.

## BOOK FOURTH—JAVERT OFF THE TRACK

### I

#### JAVERT OFF THE TRACK

**J**AVERT made his way with slow steps from the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

He walked with his head down for the first time in his life, and, for the first time in his life as well, with his hands behind his back.

Until that day Javert had taken, of the two attitudes of Napoleon, only that which expresses resolution, the arms folded upon the breast; that which expresses uncertainty, the hands behind the back, was unknown to him. Now, a change had taken place; his whole person, slow and gloomy, bore the impress of anxiety.

He plunged into the silent streets.

Still he followed one direction.

He took the shortest route toward the Seine, reached

the Quai des Ormes, went along the quay, passed the Grève and stopped at a little distance from the post of the Place du Châtelet, at the corner of the Pont Notre Dame. The Seine there forms between the Pont Notre Dame and the Pont au Change in one direction, and in the other between the Quai de la Mégisserie and the Quai aux Fleurs, a sort of square lake crossed by a rapid.

This point of the Seine is dreaded by the mariners. Nothing is more dangerous than this rapid, narrowed at that period and vexed by the piles of the mill bridge, since removed. The two bridges, so near each other, increase the danger, the water hurrying fearfully under the arches. It rolls on with broad, terrible folds; it gathers and heaps up; the flood strains at the piles of the bridge as if to tear them out with huge liquid ropes. Men who fall in there one never sees again; the best swimmers are drowned.

Javert leaned both elbows on the parapet, with his chin in his hands, and, while his fingers were clinched mechanically in the thickest of his whiskers, he reflected.

There had been a new thing, a revolution, a catastrophe in the depths of his being; and there was matter for self-examination.

Javert was suffering frightfully.

For some hours Javert had ceased to be natural. He was troubled; this brain, so limpid in its blindness, had lost its transparency; there was a cloud in this crystal. Javert felt that duty was growing weaker in his conscience and he could not hide it from himself. When he had so unexpectedly met Jean Valjean upon the beach of the Seine there had been in him something of the wolf, which seizes his prey again, and of the dog which again finds his master.

He saw before him two roads, both equally straight; but he saw two; and that terrified him—him, who had never in his life known but one straight line. And, bitter anguish, these two roads were contradictory. One of these two straight lines excluded the other. Which of the two was the true one?

His condition was inexpressible.

To owe life to a malefactor, to accept that debt and to pay it, to be, in spite of himself, on a level with a fugitive

from justice and to pay him for one service with another service; to allow him to say: "Go away," and to say to him in turn: "Be free;" to sacrifice duty, that general obligation, to personal motives and to feel in these personal motives something general also, and, perhaps, superior; to betray society in order to be true to his own conscience; that all these absurdities should be realized and that they should be accumulated upon himself, this it was by which he was prostrated.

One thing had astonished him, that Jean Valjean had spared him, and one thing had petrified him, that he, Javert, had spared Jean Valjean.

Where was he? He sought himself and found himself no longer.

What should he do now? Give up Jean Valjean, that was wrong; leave Jean Valjean free, that was wrong. In the first case, the man of authority would fall lower than the man of the galley; in the second, a convict rose higher than the law and set his foot upon it. In both cases, dishonor to him, Javert. In every course which was open to him there was a fall. Destiny has certain extremities precipitous upon the impossible and beyond which life is no more than an abyss. Javert was at one of these extremities.

One of his causes of anxiety was, that he was compelled to think. The very violence of all these contradictory emotions forced him to it. Thought, an unaccustomed thing to him and singularly painful.

There is always a certain amount of internal rebellion in thought; and he was irritated at having it within him.

Thought, upon any subject, no matter what, outside of the narrow circle of his functions, had been to him, in all cases, a folly and a fatigue; but thought upon the day which had just gone by was torture. He must absolutely, however, look into his conscience, after such shocks, and render an account of himself to himself.

What he had just done made him shudder. He had—he, Javert—thought good to decide, against all the regulations of the police, against the whole social and judicial organization, against the entire code, in favor of a release; that had pleased him; he had substituted his own affairs for the public affairs; could this be characterized? Every time that he set himself face to face with this nameless



act which he had committed he trembled from head to foot. Upon what should he resolve? A single source remained; to return immediately to the Rue de l'Homme Armé, and have Jean Valjean arrested. It was clear that that was what he must do. He could not.

Something barred the way to him on that side.

Something? What? Is there anything else in the world besides tribunals, sentences, police and authority? Javert's ideas were overturned.

A galley-slave sacred! a convict not to be taken by justice! and that by the act of Javert!

That Javert and Jean Valjean, the man made to be severe, the man made to be submissive, that these two men, who were each the thing of the law, should have come to this point of setting themselves both above the law, was not this terrible?

What, then? such enormities should happen and nobody should be punished? Jean Valjean, stronger than the entire social order, should be free, and he, Javert, continue to eat the bread of the government!

His reflections gradually became terrible.

He might also through these reflections have reproached himself a little in regard to the insurgent carried to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; but he did not think of it. The lesser fault was lost in the greater. Besides, that insurgent was clearly a dead man, and legally, death extinguishes pursuit.

Jean Valjean then was the weight he had on his mind.

Jean Valjean confounded him. All the axioms which had been the supports of his whole life crumbled away before this man. Jean Valjean's generosity toward him, Javert, overwhelmed him. Other acts, which he remembered and which he had hitherto treated as lies and follies, returned to him now as realities. M. Madeleine reappeared behind Jean Valjean, and the two figures overlaid each other so as to make but one, which was venerable. Javert felt that something horrible was penetrating his soul, admiration for a convict. Respect for a galley-slave, can that be possible? He shuddered at it, yet could not shake it off. It was useless to struggle, he was reduced to confess before his own inner tribunal the sublimity of this wretch. That was hateful.

A beneficent malefactor, a compassionate convict, kind, helpful, clement, returning good for evil, returning pardon for hatred, loving pity rather than vengeance, preferring to destroy himself rather than to destroy his enemy, saving him who had stricken him, kneeling upon the height of virtue, nearer the angels than men, Javert was compelled to acknowledge that this monster existed.

This could not last.

Certainly, and we repeat it, he had not given himself up without resistance to this monster, this infamous angel, this hideous hero, at whom he was almost as indignant as he was astounded. Twenty times, while he was in that carriage face to face with Jean Valjean, the legal tiger had roared within him. Twenty times he had been tempted to throw himself upon Jean Valjean, to seize him and to devour him—that is to say, to arrest him. What more simple, indeed? To cry at the first post in front of which they passed: “Here is a fugitive from justice in breach of his ban!” To call the gendarmes and say to them: “This man is yours!” then to go away; to leave this condemned man there, to ignore the rest and to have nothing more to do with it. This man is forever the prisoner of the law; the law will do what it will with him. What more just? Javert had said all this to himself; he had desired to go further, to act, to apprehend the man, and then, as now, he had not been able; and every time that his hand had been raised convulsively toward Jean Valjean’s collar, his hand, as if under an enormous weight, had fallen back, and in the depths of his mind he had heard a voice—a strange voice—crying to him: “Very well, give up your savior; then have Pontius Pilate’s basin brought and wash your claws!”

Then his reflections fell back upon himself, and by the side of Jean Valjean, exalted, he beheld himself—him, Javert—degraded.

A convict was his benefactor!

But, also, why had he permitted this man to let him live? He had, in that barricade, the right to be killed. He should have availed himself of that right. To have called the other insurgents to his aid against Jean Valjean, to have secured a shot by force that would have been better.

His supreme anguish was the loss of all certainty. He felt that he was uprooted. The code was now but a stump in his hand. He had to do with scruples of an unknown species. There was in him a revelation of feeling entirely distinct from the declarations of the law, his only standard hitherto. To retain his old virtue that no longer sufficed. An entire order of unexpected facts arose and subjugated him. An entire new world appeared to his soul; favor accepted and returned; devotion, compassion, indulgence, acts of violence committed by pity upon austerity, respect of persons, no more final condemnation, no more damnation, the possibility of a tear in the eye of the law, a mysterious justice, according to God, going counter to justice according to men. He perceived in the darkness the fearful rising of an unknown moral sun; he was horrified and blinded by it. An owl compelled to an eagle's gaze.

He said to himself that it was true, then, that there were exceptions; that authority might be put out of countenance; that rule might stop short before a fact; that everything was not framed in the text of the code; that the unforeseen would be obeyed; that the virtue of a convict might spread a snare for the virtue of a functionary; that the monstrous might be divine; that destiny had such ambuscades as these, and he thought with despair that even he had not been proof against a surprise.

He was compelled to recognize the existence of kindness. This convict had been kind. And he himself, wonderful to tell, he had just been kind. Therefore, he had become depraved.

He thought himself base. He was a horror to himself.

Javert's ideal was not to be humane, not to be great, not to be sublime, it was to be irreproachable. Now he had just failed.

How had he reached that point? How had all this happened? He could not have told himself. He took his head in his hands, but it was in vain, he could not explain it to himself.

He had certainly always had the intention of returning Jean Valjean to the law, of which Jean Valjean was the captive, and of which he, Javert, was the slave. He had not confessed to himself for a single moment while he held him that he had thought of letting him go. It was in



some sort without his knowledge that his hand had opened and released him.

All manner of interrogation points flashed before his eyes. He put questions to himself, and he made answers, and his answers frightened him. He asked himself: "This convict, this desperate man, whom I have pursued even to persecution, and who has had me beneath his feet and could have avenged himself, and who ought to have done so, as well for his revenge as for his security, in granting me life, in sparing me, what has he done? His duty? No. Something more. And I, in sparing him in my turn, what have I done? My duty? No. Something more. There is, then, something more than duty." Here he was startled; his balances were disturbed; one of the scales fell into the abyss, the other flew into the sky, and Javert felt no less dismay from the one which was above than from the one which was below. Without being the least in the world what is called a Voltairean, or a philosopher, or a sceptic, respectful on the contrary, by instinct, toward the established church, he knew it only as an august fragment of the social whole; order was his dogma and was enough for him since he had been of the age of a man, and an official, he had put almost all his religion in the police. Being, and we employ the words here without the slightest irony and in their most serious acceptation, being, we have said, a spy as men are priests. He had a superior, M. Gisquet; he had scarcely thought, until to-day, of that other superior, God.

This new chief, God, he felt unawares, and was perplexed thereat.

He had lost his bearings in this unexpected presence; he did not know what to do with this superior; he who was not ignorant that the subordinate is bound always to yield, that he ought neither to disobey, nor to blame, nor to discuss, and that, in presence of a superior who astonishes him too much, the inferior has no resource but resignation.

But how manage to send in his resignation to God?

However this might be—and it was always to this that he returned—one thing overruled all else for him, that was, that he had just committed an appalling infraction. He had closed his eyes upon a convicted second offender in breach of his ban. He had set a galley-slave at large. He

had robbed the laws of a man who belonged to them. He had done that. He could not understand himself. He was not sure of being himself. The very reasons of his action escaped him, he caught only the whirl of them. He had lived up to this moment by that blind faith which a dark probity engenders. This faith was leaving him, this probity was failing him. All that he had believed was dissipated. Truths which he had no wish for, inexorably besieged him. He must henceforth be another man. He suffered the strange pangs of a conscience suddenly operated upon for the cataract. He saw what he revolted at seeing. He felt that he was emptied, useless, broken off from his past life, destitute, dissolved. Authority was dead in him. He had no further reason for existence.

Terrible situation! To be moved.

To be granite, and to doubt! To be the statue of penalty cast in a single piece in the mold of the law, and to suddenly perceive that you have under your breast of bronze something preposterous and disobedient which almost resembles a heart! To be led by it to render good for good, although you may have said until to-day that this good was evil! To be the watch-dog, and to fawn! To be ice, and to melt! To be a vise, and to become a hand! To feel your fingers suddenly open! To lose your hold, appalling thing!

The projectile man no longer knowing his road, and recoiling!

To be obliged to acknowledge this: infallibility is not infallible; there may be an error in the dogma; all is not said when a code has spoken; society is not perfect; authority is complicate with vacillation; a cracking is possible in the immutable; judges are men; the law may be deceived; the tribunals may be mistaken! To see a flaw in the immense blue crystal of the firmament!

What was passing in Javert was the Fampoux of a rectilinear conscience, the throwing of a soul out of its path; the crushing of a probity irresistibly hurled in a straight line and breaking itself against God. Certainly, it was strange that the fireman of order, the engineer of authority, mounted upon the blind iron-horse of the rigid path, could be thrown off by a ray of light! That the incom-

mutable, the direct, the correct, the geometrical, the passive, the perfect, could bend! That there should be a road to Damascus for the locomotive!

God, always interior to man, and unyielding, He, the true conscience, to the false; a prohibition to the spark to extinguish itself; an order to the ray to remember the sun; an injunction to the soul to recognize the real absolute when it is confronted with the fictitious absolute; humanity imperishable; the human heart inadmissible; that splendid phenomenon, the most beautiful perhaps of our interior wonders, did Javert comprehend it? Did Javert penetrate it? Did Javert form any idea of it? Evidently not. But under the pressure of this incontestable incomprehensible he felt that his head was bursting.

He was less the transfigured than the victim of this miracle. He bore it, exasperated. He saw in it only an immense difficulty of existence. It seemed to him that henceforth his breathing would be oppressed forever.

To have the unknown over his head—he was not accustomed to that.

Until now all that he had above him had been in his sight a smooth, simple, limpid surface; nothing there unknown, nothing obscure; nothing which was not definite, co-ordinated, concatenated, precise, exact, circumscribed, limited, shut in, all foreseen; authority was a plane; no fall in it, no dizziness before it. Javert had never seen the unknown except below. The irregular, the unexpected, the disorderly opening of chaos, the possible slipping into an abyss; that belonged to inferior religions, to the rebellious, the wicked, the miserable. Now Javert was thrown over backward, and he was abruptly startled by this monstrous apparition: a gulf on high.

What then? He was dismantled completely! he was disconcerted, absolutely! In what should he trust? That of which he had been convinced gave way!

What! the flaw in the cuirass of society could be found by a magnanimous wretch! What! an honest servant of the law could find himself suddenly caught between two crimes—the crime of letting a man escape and the crime of arresting him! All was not certain in the order given by the state to the official. There might be blind alleys in duty. What then! was all that real? Was it true that an



old bandit, weighed down by condemnations, could rise up and be right at last? Was this credible? Were there cases, then, when the law ought, before a transfigured crime, to retire, stammering excuses?

Yes, there were! and Javert saw it and Javert touched it! and not only could he not deny it, but he took part in it. They were realities. It was abominable that real facts could reach such deformity.

If facts did their duty they would be contented with being the proofs of the law; facts, it is God who sends them. Was anarchy, then, about to descend from on high?

So—and beneath the magnifying power of anguish, and in the optical illusion of consternation, all that might have restrained and corrected his impression vanished, and society and the human race and the universe were summed up henceforth in his eyes in one simple and terrible feature—so punishment, the thing judged, the force due to legislation, the decrees of the sovereign courts, the magistracy, the government, prevention and repression, official wisdom, legal infallibility, the principle of authority, all the dogmas upon which repose political and civil security, sovereignty, justice, the logic flowing from the code, the social absolute, the public truth—all that confusion, jumble, chaos himself, Javert, the spy of order, incorruptibility in the service of the police, the mastiff-providence of society, vanquished and prostrated; and upon all this ruin a man standing, with a green cap on his head and a halo about his brow; such was the overturn to which he had come; such was the frightful vision which he had in his soul.

Could that be endurable? No.

Unnatural state, if ever there was one. There were only two ways to get out of it. One to go resolutely to Jean Valjean and to return the man of the galleys to the dungeon. The other—

Javert left the parapet, and, his head erect this time, made his way with a firm step toward the post indicated by a lamp at one of the corners of the Place du Châtelet.

On reaching it he saw a sergent-de-ville through the window and he entered. Merely from the manner in which they push open the door of a guard-house, policemen recognize each other. Javert gave his name, showed his card to the sergeant, and sat down at the table of the

post, on which a candle was burning. There was a pen on the table, a leaden inkstand and some paper in readiness for chance reports and the orders of the night patrol.

This table, always accompanied by its straw chair, is an institution; it exists in all the police posts; it is invariably adorned with a box-wood saucer, full of sawdust and a pasteboard box full of red wafers, and it is the lower stage of the official style. On it the literature of the state begins.

Javert took the pen and a sheet of paper and began to write. This is what he wrote:

SOME OBSERVATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SERVICE

First—I beg M. l'Prefect to glance at this.

Second—The prisoners, on their return from examination, take off their shoes and remain barefooted upon the pavement while they are searched. Many cough on returning to the prison. This involves hospital expenses.

Third—Spinning is good, with relays of officers at intervals; but there should be, on important occasions, two officers at least who do not lose sight of each other, so that, if, for any cause whatever, one officer becomes weak in the service, the other is watching him, and supplies his place.

Fourth—It is difficult to explain why the special regulation of the prison of the Madelonnettes forbids a prisoner having a chair, even on paying for it.

Fifth—At the Madelonnettes, there are only two bars to the sutler's window, which enables the sutler to let the prisoners touch her hand.

Sixth—The prisoners, called barkers, who call the other prisoners to the parlor, make the prisoner pay them two sous for calling his name distinctly. This is a theft.

Seventh—For a dropped thread, they retain ten sous from the prisoner in the weaving-shop; this is an abuse on the part of the contractor, since the cloth is just as good.

Eighth—It is annoying that the visitors of La Force have to cross the Cour des Mêmes to reach the parlor of Sainte Marie l'Egyptienne.

Ninth—It is certain that gendarmes are every day heard relating in the yard of the préfecture the examinations of those brought before the magistrates. For a gendarme, who should hold such things sacred, to repeat what he has heard in the examining chamber is a serious disorder.

Tenth—Mme. Henry is an honest woman; her sutler's window is very neat; but it is wrong for a woman to keep the wicket of the trap-door of the secret cells. It is not worthy the conciergerie of a great civilization.

Javert wrote these lines in his calmest and most correct

handwriting, not omitting a dot, and making the paper squeak resolutely under his pen. Beneath the last lines he signed:

JAVERT, Inspector of the first class.

At the Post of the Place du Châtelet,

June 7, 1832, about 1 o'clock in the morning.

Javert dried the fresh ink on the paper, folded it like a letter, sealed it, wrote on the back: "Note for the administration," left it on the table, and went out of the post. The glazed and grated door closed behind him.

He again crossed the Place du Châtelet diagonally, regained the quay, and returned with automatic precision to the very point which he had left a quarter of an hour before; he leaned over there and found himself again in the same attitude, on the same stone of the parapet. It seemed as if he had not stirred.

The darkness was complete. It was the sepulchral moment which follows midnight. A ceiling of clouds concealed the stars. The sky was only an ominous depth. The houses in the city no longer showed a single light; nobody was passing; all that he could see of the streets and the quays was deserted; Notre Dame and the towers of the Palais de Justice seemed like features of the night. A lamp reddened the curb of the quay. The silhouettes of the bridges were distorted in the mist, one behind the other. The rains had swelled the river.

The place where Javert was leaning was, it will be remembered, situated exactly over the rapids of the Seine, perpendicularly over that formidable whirlpool which knots and unknots itself like an endless screw.

Javert bent his head and looked. All was black. He could distinguish nothing. He heard a frothing sound, but he did not see the river. At intervals, in that giddy depth, a gleam appeared in dim serpentine contortions, the water having this power, in the most complete night, of taking light, nobody knows whence, and changing it into an adder. The gleam vanished, and all became again indistinct. Immensity seemed opened there. What was beneath was not water, it was chasm. The wall of the quay, abrupt, confused, mingled with vapor, suddenly lost to sight, seemed like an escarpment of the infinite.

He saw nothing, but he perceived the hostile chill of



the water and the insipid odor of the moist stones. A fierce breath rose from that abyss. The swollen river guessed at rather than perceived, the tragical whispering of the flood, the dismal vastness of the arches of the bridge, the imaginable fall into that gloomy void, all that shadow was full of horror.

Javert remained for some minutes motionless gazing into that opening of darkness; he contemplated the invisible with a fixedness which resembled attention. The water gurgled. Suddenly he took off his hat and laid it on the edge of the quay. A moment afterward a tall and black form, which from the distance some belated passer might have taken for a phantom, appeared standing on the parapet, bent toward the Seine, then sprang up and fell straight into the darkness; there was a dull splash; and the shadow alone was in the secret of the convulsions of that obscure form which had disappeared under the water.

## BOOK FIFTH — THE GRANDSON AND THE GRANDFATHER

### I

IN WHICH WE SEE THE TREE WITH THE PLATE OF ZINC  
ONCE MORE

SOME time after the events which we have just related, the *Sieur Boulatruelle* had a vivid emotion.

The *Sieur Boulatruelle* is that road-laborer of *Montfermeil* of whom we have already had a glimpse in the dark portions of the first part of this work.

*Boulatruelle*, it will perhaps be remembered, was a man occupied with troublous and various things. He broke stones and damaged travelers on the highway. Digger and robber, he had a dream; he believed in treasures buried in the forest of *Montfermeil*. He hoped one day to find money in the ground at the foot of a tree; in the meantime he was willing to search for it in the pockets of the passers-by.

Nevertheless, for the moment he was prudent. He had just had a narrow escape. He had been, as we know, picked up in the *Jondrette* garret with the other bandits.

Utility of a vice: his drunkenness had saved him. It could never be clearly made out whether he was there as robber or as robbed. An order of *nol. pros.* found upon his clearly proved state of drunkenness on the evening of the ambuscade had set him at liberty. He regained the freedom of the woods. He returned to his road from Gagny to Lagny to break stones for the use of the state under administrative surveillance, with downcast mien, very thoughtful, a little cooled toward robbery, which had nearly ruined him, but only turning with the more affection toward wine, which had just saved him.

As to the vivid emotion which he had a little while after his return beneath the thatched roof of his road-laborer's hut, it was this:

One morning, a little before the break of day, Boulatruelle, while on his way to his work according to his habit, and upon the watch, perhaps, perceived a man among the branches, whose back only he could see, but whose form, as it seemed to him, through the distance and the twilight, was not altogether unknown to him. Boulatruelle, although a drunkard, had a correct and lucid memory, an indispensable defensive arm to him who is slightly in conflict with legal order.

"Where the devil have I seen something like that man?" inquired he of himself.

But he could make himself no answer, save that it resembled somebody of whom he had a confused remembrance.

Boulatruelle, however, aside from the identity which he did not succeed in getting hold of, made some comparisons and calculations. This man was not of the country. He had come there. On foot, evidently. No public carriage passes Montfermeil at that hour. He had walked all night. Where did he come from? not far off. For he had neither bag nor bundle. From Paris, doubtless. Why was he in the wood? why was he there at such an hour? what had he come there to do?

Boulatruelle thought of the treasure. By dint of digging into his memory he dimly recollected having already had, several years before, a similar surprise in relation to a man who, it struck him, was very possibly the same man.

While he was meditating, he had under the very weight

of his meditation, bowed his head, which was natural, but not very cunning. When he raised it again there was no longer anything there. The man had vanished in the forest and the twilight.

"The deuce," said Boulatruelle, "I will find him again. I will discover the parish of that parishioner. This Patron Minette prowler has a why; I will find it out. Nobody has a secret in my woods without I have a finger in it."

He took his pickaxe, which was very sharp.

"Here is something," he muttered, "to pry into the ground or a man with."

And, as one attaches one thread to another thread, limping along at his best in the path which the man must have followed, he took his way through the thicket.

When he had gone one hundred yards, daylight, which began to break, aided him. Footsteps printed on the sand here and there, grass matted down, heath broken off, young branches bent into the bushes and rising again with a graceful slowness, like the arms of a pretty woman who stretches herself on awaking, indicated to him a sort of track. He followed it, then he lost it. Time was passing. He pushed further forward into the wood and reached a kind of eminence. A morning hunter who passed along a path in the distance, whistling the air of Guillery, inspired him with the idea of climbing a tree. Although old, he was agile. There was near by a beech tree of great height, worthy of Tityrus and Boulatruelle. Boulatruelle climbed the beech as high as he could. The idea was good. In exploring the solitude on the side where the wood was entirely wild and tangled, Boulatruelle suddenly perceived the man.

Hardly had he perceived him when he lost sight of him.

The man entered, or rather glided, into a distant glade, marked by tall trees, but which Boulatruelle knew very well from having noticed there, near a great heap of burrstone, a wounded chestnut tree bandaged with a plate of zinc nailed upon the bark. This glade is the one which was formerly called the Blaru ground. The heap of stones, intended for nobody knows what use, which could be seen there thirty years ago, is doubtless there still. Nothing equals the longevity of a heap of stones, unless



it be that of a palisade fence. It is there provisionally. What a reason for enduring!

Boulatruelle, with the rapidity of joy, let himself fall from the tree rather than descended. The lair was found, the problem was to catch the game. That famous treasure of his dreams was probably there.

It was no easy matter to reach that glade. By the beaten paths, which make one thousand provoking zig-zags, it required a good quarter of an hour. In a straight line, through the underbrush, which is there singularly thick, very thorny, and very aggressive, it required a long half hour. There was Boulatruelle's mistake. He believed in the straight line; an optical illusion which is respectable, but which ruins many men. The underbrush, bristling as it was, appeared to him the best road.

"Let us take the wolves' Rue de Rivoli," said he.

Boulatruelle, accustomed to going astray, this time made the blunder of going straight.

He threw himself resolutely into the thickest of the bushes.

He had to deal with hollies, with nettles, with hawthorns, with sweet-briers, with thistles, with exceedingly irascible brambles. He was very much scratched.

At the bottom of the ravine he found a stream which must be crossed.

He finally reached the Blaru glade, at the end of forty minutes, sweating, soaked, breathless, torn, ferocious.

Nobody in the glade.

Boulatruelle ran to the heap of stones. It was in its place. Nobody had carried it away.

As for the man, he had vanished into the forest. He had escaped. Where? on which side? in what thicket? Impossible to guess.

And, a bitter thing, there was behind the heap of stones, before the tree with the plate of zinc, some fresh earth, a pick, forgotten or abandoned, and a hole.

This hole was empty.

"Robber!" cried Boulatruelle, showing both fists to the horizon.

## II

## MARIUS, ESCAPING FROM CIVIL WAR, PREPARES FOR DOMESTIC WAR

MARIUS was for a long time neither dead nor alive. He had for several weeks a fever, accompanied with delirium, and serious cerebral symptoms resulting rather from the concussion produced by the wounds in the head than from the wounds themselves.

He repeated the name of Cosette during entire nights in the dismal loquacity of fever and with gloomy obstinacy of agony. The size of certain gashes was a serious danger, the suppuration of large wounds always being liable to reabsorption, and consequently to kill the patient, under certain atmospheric influences; at every change in the weather, at the slightest storm, the physician was anxious. "Above all let the wounded man have no excitement," he repeated. The dressings were complicated and difficult, the fastening of cloths and bandages with sparadrap not being invented at that period. Nicolette used for lint a sheet "as big as a ceiling," said she. It was not without difficulty that the chloruretted lotions and the nitrate of silver brought the gangrene to an end. As long as there was danger, M. Gillenormand, in despair at the bedside of his grandson, was, like Marius, neither dead nor alive.

Every day, and sometimes twice a day, a very well-dressed gentleman with white hair—such was the description given by the porter—came to inquire after the wounded man, and left a large package of lint for the dressing.

At last, on the 7th of September, four months to a day, after the sorrowful night when they had brought him home dying to his grandfather, the physician declared him out of danger. Convalescence began. Marius was, however, obliged still to remain for more than two months stretched on a long chair, on account of the accident resulting from the fracture of the shoulder-blade. There is always a last wound like this which will not close, and which prolongs the dressings, to the great disgust of the patient.

However, this long sickness and this long convalescence saved him from pursuit. In France, there is no anger, even governmental, which six months does not extinguish. Emeutes, in the present state of society, are so much the fault of everybody that they are followed by a certain necessity of closing the eyes.

Let us add that the infamous Gisquet order, which enjoined physicians to inform against the wounded, having outraged public opinion, and not only public opinion, but the king first of all, the wounded were shielded and protected by this indignation; and, with the exception of those who had been taken prisoners in actual combat, the courts-martial dared not disturb any. Marius was therefore left in peace.

M. Gillenormand passed first through every anguish, and then every ecstasy. They had great difficulty in preventing him from passing every night with the wounded man; he had his large armchair brought to the side of Marius' bed; he insisted that his daughter should take the finest linen in the house for compresses and bandages. Mdle. Gillenormand, like a prudent and elder person, found means to spare the fine linen, while she left the grandfather to suppose that he was obeyed. M. Gillenormand did not permit anybody to explain to him that for making lint cambric is not so good as coarse linen, nor new linen so good as old. He superintended all the dressings, from which Mdle. Gillenormand modestly absented herself. When the dead flesh was cut with scissors he would say: "*Aïe! aïe!*" Nothing was so touching as to see him hand a cup of gruel to the wounded man with his gentle senile trembling. He overwhelmed the doctor with questions. He did not perceive that he always asked the same. On the day the physician announced to him that Marius was out of danger the good man was in delirium. He gave his porter three louis as a gratuity. In the evening, on going to his room, he danced a gavotte, making castanets of his thumb and forefinger, and he sang a song which follows:

"Jeanne est née à Fougère,  
Vrai nid d'une bergère  
J'adore son jupon  
Fripon.



“Amour, tu es en elle;  
Car c'est dans sa prunelle  
Que tu mets ton carquois,  
Narquois!

“Moi, je la chante, te j'aile  
Plus que Diane même,  
Jeanne et ses durs tetons  
Bretons.”

Then he knelt upon a chair, and Basque, who watched him through the half-opened door, was certain that he was praying.

Hitherto he had hardly believed in God.

At each new phase of improvement, which continued to grow more and more visible, the grandfather raved. He did a thousand mirthful things mechanically; he ran up and down stairs without knowing why. A neighbor, a pretty woman withal, was amazed at receiving a large bouquet one morning; it was M. Gillenormand who sent it to her. The husband made a scene. M. Gillenormand attempted to take Nicolette upon his knees. He called Marius M. l'Baron.

He cried: “*Vive la République!*”

At every moment he asked the physician:

“There is no more danger, is there?” He looked at Marius with a grandmother's eyes. He brooded him while he ate. He no longer knew himself, he no longer counted on himself. Marius was the master of the house, there was abdication in his joy, he was the grandson of his grandson.

In this lightness of heart which possessed him, he was the most venerable of children. For fear of fatiguing or of annoying the convalescent, he got behind him to smile upon him. He was contented, joyous, enraptured, delightful, young. His white hairs added a sweet majesty to the cheerful light upon his face. When grace is joined with wrinkles, it is adorable. There is an unspeakable dawn in happy old age.

As for Marius, while he let them dress his wounds and care for him, he had one fixed idea: Cosette.

Since the fever and the delirium had left him he had not uttered that name, and they might have supposed that

he no longer thought of it. He held his peace, precisely because his soul was in it.

He did not know what had become of Cosette; the whole affair of the Rue de la Chanvrerie was like a cloud in his memory; shadows, almost indistinct, were floating in his mind; Eponine, Gavroche, Mabeuf, the Thenardiens, all his friends mingled drearily with the smoke of the barricade; the strange passage of M. Fauchelevent in that bloody drama produced upon him the effect of an enigma in a tempest; he understood nothing in regard to his own life; he neither knew how nor by whom he had been saved, and nobody about him knew; all that they could tell him was that he had been brought to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire in a fiacre by night; past, present, future, all was now to him but the mist of a vague idea; but there was within this mist an immovable point, one clear and precise feature, something which was granite, a resolution, a will; to find Cosette again. To him the idea of life was not distinct from the idea of Cosette; he had decreed in his heart that he would not accept the one without the other, and he was unalterably determined to demand from anybody, no matter whom, who should wish to compel him to live, from his grandfather, from fate, from hell, the restitution of his vanished Eden.

He did not hide the obstacles from himself.

Let us emphasize one point here: he was not won over, and was little softened by all the solicitude and all the tenderness of his grandfather. In the first place, he was not in the secret of it all; then, in his sick man's reveries, still feverish, perhaps, he distrusted this gentleness as a new and strange thing, the object of which was to subdue him. He remained cold. The grandfather expended his poor old smile for nothing. Marius said to himself it was well so long as he, Marius, did not speak and offered no resistance; but that, when the question of Cosette was raised, he would find another face, and his grandfather's real attitude would be unmasked. Then it would be harsh recrudescence of family questions, every sarcasm and every objection at once; Fauchelevent, Coupevent, fortune, poverty, misery, the stone at the neck, the future. Violent opposition; conclusion; refusal; Marius was bracing himself in advance.

And then, in proportion as he took new hold of life, his former griefs reappeared, the old ulcers of his memory reopened, he thought once more of the past. Colonel Pontmercy appeared again between M. Gillenormand and him, Marius; he said to himself that there was no real goodness to be hoped for from him who had been so unjust and so hard to his father. And with health, there returned to him a sort of harshness toward his grandfather. The old man bore it with gentleness.

M. Gillenormand, without manifesting it in any way, noticed that Marius, since he had been brought home and restored to consciousness, had not once said to him "father." He did not say *monsieur*, it is true; but he found means to say neither the one nor the other, by a certain manner of turning his sentences.

A crisis was evidently approaching.

As it almost always happens in similar cases, Marius, in order to try himself, skirmished before offering battle. This is called feeling the ground. One morning it happened that M. Gillenormand, over a newspaper which had fallen into his hands, spoke lightly of the convention and discharged a royalist epiphonema upon Danton, St. Just, and Robespierre. "The men of '93 were giants," said Marius sternly. The old man was silent, and did not whisper for the rest of the day.

Marius, who had always present to his mind the inflexible grandfather of his early years, saw in this silence an intense concentration of anger, augured from it a sharp conflict, and increased his preparations for combat in the inner recesses of his thought.

He determined that in case of refusal he would tear off his bandages, dislocate his shoulder, lay bare and open his remaining wounds, and refuse all nourishment. His wounds were his ammunition. To have Cosette or to die.

He waited for the favorable moment with the crafty patience of the sick.

That moment came.



## III

## MARIUS ATTACKS

ONE day M. Gillenormand, while his daughter was putting in order the vials and the cups upon the marble top of the bureau, bent over Marius and said to him in his most tender tone:

"Do you see, my darling Marius, in your place I would eat meat now rather than fish. A fried sole is excellent to begin a convalescence, but, to put the sick man on his legs, it takes a good cutlet."

Marius, nearly all whose strength had returned, gathered it together, sat up in bed, rested his clinched hands on the sheets, looked his grandfather in the face, assumed a terrible air, and said: "This leads me to say something to you."

"What is it?"

"It is that I wish to marry."

"Foreseen," said the grandfather. And he burst out laughing.

"How foreseen?"

"Yes, foreseen. You shall have her, your lassie!"

Marius, astounded and overwhelmed by the dazzling burst of happiness, trembled in every limb.

M. Gillenormand continued:

"Yes, you shall have her, your handsome, pretty little girl. She comes every day in the shape of an old gentleman to inquire after you. Since you were wounded she has passed her time in weeping and making lint. I have made inquiry. She lives in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7. Ah, we are ready! Ah! you want her! Well, you shall have her. That catches you. You had arranged your little plot; you said to yourself: 'I am going to make it known bluntly to that grandfather, to that mummy of the Regency and of the Directory, to that old beau, to that Dorante become a G ron te; he has had his levities, too, himself, and his amours, and his grisettes, and his Cosettes; he has made his display, he has had his wings, he has eaten his spring bread; he must remember it well. We shall see. Battle!' Ah! you take the bug by the horns. That is good. I propose a cutlet, and your answer: 'Apropos, I wish to marry.' That is what I call a transition. Ah! you had

reckoned upon some bickering. You didn't know that I was an old coward. What do you say to that? You are spited. To find your grandfather still more stupid than yourself, you didn't expect that, you lose the argument which you were to have made to me, M. Advocate; it is provoking. Well, it is all the same, rage. I do what you wish, that cuts you out of it, idiot. Listen. I have made inquiries, I am sly, too; she is charming, she is modest, the lancer is not true; she has made heaps of lint, she is a jewel, she worships you; if you had died there would have been three of us; her bier would have accompanied mine. I had a strong notion, as soon as you were better, to plant her square at your bedside, but it is only in romances that they introduce young girls to the side of the couch of the pretty wounded men who interest them. That does not do. What would your aunt have said? You have been quite naked three-quarters of the time, my good man. Ask Nicolette, who has not left you a minute, if it was possible for a woman to be here. And then what would the doctor have said? That doesn't cure a fever, a pretty girl. Finally, it is all right; don't let us talk any more about it; it is said, it is done, it is fixed; take her. Such is my ferocity. Do you see, I saw that you did not love me; I said: 'What is there that I can do, then, to make this animal love me?' I said 'Hold on! I have my little Cosette under my hand; I will give her to him, he must surely love a little then, or let him tell why.' Ah! you thought that the old fellow was going to storm, to make a gruff voice, to cry 'No' and to lift his cane upon all this dawn. Not at all. Cosette, so be it; love; so be it; I ask nothing better, monsieur; take the trouble to marry. Be happy, my dear child."

This said, the old man burst into sobs.

And he took Marius' head; and he hugged it in both arms against his old breast, and they both began to weep. That is one of the forms of supreme happiness.

"Father!" exclaimed Marius.

"Ah! you love me then!" said the old man.

There was an ineffable moment. They choked and could not speak.

At last the old man stammered:

"Come! the ice is broken. He has called me 'father.'"

Marius released his head from his grandfather's arms and said, softly: "But, father, now that I am well, it seems to me that I could see her."

"Foreseen again, you shall see her to-morrow."

"Father!"

"What?"

"Why not to-day?"

"Well, to-day. Here goes for to-day. You have called me 'father' three times, it is well worth that. I will see to it. She shall be brought to you. Foreseen, I tell you. This has already been put into verse. It is the conclusion of André Chénier's elegy of the 'Jeune Malade,' André Chénier who was murdered by the scound—, by the giants of '93."

M. Gillenormand thought he perceived a slight frown on Marius' brow, although in truth, we should say, he was no longer listening to him, flown off as he had into ecstasy and thinking far more of Cosette than of 1793. The grandfather, trembling at having introduced André Chénier so inopportunistically, resumed precipitately:

"Murdered is not the word. The fact is that the great revolutionary geniuses, who were not evil disposed, that is incontestable, who were heroes, egad! found that André Chénier embarrassed them a little, and they had him guillot— That is to say, that those great men on the 7th of Thermidor, in the interest of the public safety, begged André Chénier to have the kindness to go—"

M. Gillenormand, choked by his own sentence, could not continue; being able neither to finish it nor retract it, while his daughter was arranging the pillow behind Marius, the old man, overwhelmed by so many emotions, threw himself, as quickly as his age permitted, out of the bedroom, pushed the door to behind, and, purple, strangling, foaming, his eyes starting from his head, found himself face to face with the honest Basque who was polishing his boots in the ante-chamber. He seized Basque by the collar and cried full in his face with fury: "By the hundred thousand Javottes of the devil, those brigands assassinated him!"

"Who, monsieur?"

"André Chénier!"

"Yes, monsieur," said Basque, in dismay.



## IV

MDLLE. GILLENORMAND AT LAST THINKS IT NOT IMPROPER THAT M. FAUCHELEVENT SHOULD COME IN WITH SOMETHING UNDER HIS ARM

COSETTE and Marius saw each other again.

What that interview was we will not attempt to tell. There are things which we should not undertake to paint; the sun is of the number.

The whole family, including Basque and Nicolette, were assembled in Marius' room when Cosette entered.

She appeared on the threshold; it seemed as if she were in a cloud.

Just at that instant the grandfather was about to blow his nose; he stopped short, holding his nose in his handkerchief and looking at Cosette above it.

"Adorable!" he exclaimed.

Then he blew his nose with a loud noise.

Cosette was intoxicated, enraptured, startled, in heaven. She was as frightened as one can be by happiness. She stammered, quite pale, quite red, wishing to throw herself into Marius' arms and not daring to, ashamed to show her love before all those people. We are pitiless toward happy lovers; we stay there when they have the strongest desire to be alone. They, however, have no need at all of society.

With Cosette and behind her had entered a man with white hair, grave, smiling nevertheless, but with a vague and poignant smile. This was "M. Fauchelevent"; this was Jean Valjean.

He was "very well dressed," as the porter had said, in a new black suit with a white cravat.

The porter was a thousand miles from recognizing in his correct bourgeois, in his probable notary, the frightful corpse-bearer who had landed at his door on the night of the 7th of June, ragged, muddy, hideous, haggard, his face masked by blood and dirt, supporting the fainting Marius in his arms; still his porter's scent was awakened. When M. Fauchelevent had arrived with Cosette, the porter could not help confiding this remark to his wife:

"I don't know why I always imagine that I have seen that face somewhere."

M. Fauchelevant, in Marius' room, stayed near the door, as if apart. He had under his arm a package similar in appearance to an octavo volume, wrapped in paper. The paper of the envelope was greenish and seemed mouldy.

"Does this gentleman always have books under his arm like that?" asked Mdlle. Gillenormand, who did not like books, in a low voice to Nicolette.

"Well," answered M. Gillenormand, who had heard her, in the same tone, "he is a scholar. What then? Is it his fault? M. Boulard, whom I knew, never went out without a book either, and always had an old volume against his heart like that."

And bowing, he said, in a low voice:

"M. Trachelevant—"

Father Gillenormand did not do this on purpose, but inattention to proper names was an aristocratic way he had.

"M. Trachelevant, I have the honor of asking of you for my grandson, M. l'Baron Marius Pontmercy, the hand of mademoiselle."

M. Trachelevant bowed.

"It is done," said the grandfather.

And, turning toward Marius and Cosette, with arms extended and blessing, he cried:

"Permission to adore each other."

They did not make him say it twice. It was all the same! The cooing began. They talked low, Marius leaning on his long chair, Cosette standing near him. "Oh, my God!" murmured Cosette, "I see you again! It is you! It is you! To have gone to fight like that! But why? It is horrible. For four months I have been dead. Oh, how naughty it is to have been in that battle. What had I done to you? I pardon you, but you won't do it again. Just now, when they came to tell us to come, I thought again I should die, but it was of joy. I was so sad! I did not take time to dress myself; I must look like a fright. What will your relatives say of me, to see me with a collar ragged? But speak, now! You let me do all the talking. We are still in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. Your shoulder, that was terrible. They told me that they could put their fist into it. And then they have

cut your flesh with scissors. That is frightful. I have cried; I have no eyes left. It is strange that anybody can suffer like that. Your grandfather has a very kind appearance. Don't disturb yourself; don't rest on your elbow; take care, you will hurt yourself. Oh, how happy I am. So our trouble is all over! I am very silly. I wanted to say something to you that I have forgotten completely. Do you love me still? We live in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. There is no garden. I have been making lint all the time. Here, monsieur, look; it is your fault my fingers are calloused."

"Angel!" said Marius.

*Angel* is the only word in the language which can not be worn out. No other word would resist the pitiless use which lovers make of it.

Then, as there were spectators, they stopped and did not say another word, contenting themselves with touching each other's hands very gently.

M. Gillenormand turned toward all those who were in the room, and cried:

"Why don't you talk loud, the rest of you? Make a noise behind the scenes. Come, a little uproar, the devil! so that these children can chatter at their ease."

And, approaching Marius and Cosette, he said to them very low:

"Make love. Don't be disturbed."

Aunt Gillenormand witnessed with amazement this irruption of light into her aged interior. This amazement was not at all aggressive; it was not the least in the world the scandalized and envious look of an owl upon two ring-doves; it was the dull eyes of a poor, innocent girl of 57; it was incomplete life beholding that triumph—love.

"Mdlle. Gillenormand the elder," said her father to her, "I told you plainly that this would happen."

He remained silent a moment and added:

"Behold the happiness of others."

Then he turned toward Cosette:

"How pretty she is! how pretty she is! She is a Greuze. You are going to have her all alone to yourself, then, rascal! Ah! my rogue, you have a narrow escape from me, you are lucky; if I were not fifteen years too old we would cross swords for who should have her. Stop, I am in love



with you, mademoiselle. That is very natural. It is your right. Ah! the sweet, pretty, charming little wedding that this is going to make! Saint Denis du Saint Sacrament is our parish, but I will have a dispensation so that you may be married at St. Paul's. The church is better. It was built by the Jesuits. It is more coquettish. It is opposite the fountain of Cardinal de Birague. The masterpiece of Jesuit architecture is at Namur. It is called St. Loup. You must go there when you are married. It is worth the journey. Mademoiselle, I am altogether of your opinion, I want girls to marry, they are made for that. There is a certain St. Catharine whom I would always like to see with her hair down. To be an old maid, that is fine, but it is cold. The Bible says: 'Multiply.' To save the people we need Jeanne d'Arc; but to make the people we need Mother Gigogne. So marry, beauties, I really don't see the good of being an old maid. I know very well that they have a chapel apart in the church, and that they talk a good deal about the sisterhood of the Virgin; but, zounds! a handsome husband, a fine fellow, and at the end of the year a big, flaxen-haired boy who sucks you merrily, and who has good folds of fat on his legs, and who squeezes your breast by handfuls in his little rosy paws while he laughs like the dawn, that is better, after all, than holding a taper at vespers and singing "Turris eburnea!" "

The grandfather executed a pirouette upon his ninety-year-old heels and began to talk again like a spring which flies back:

"Ainsi, bornant le cours de tes rêvasseries,  
Alcippe, il est donc vrai, dans peu tu te maries."

"By the way."

"What, father?"

"Didn't you have an intimate friend?"

"Yes, Courfeyrac."

"What has become of him?"

"He is dead."

"Very well."

He sat down near them, made Cosette sit down and took their four hands in his old wrinkled hands:

"She is exquisite, this darling. She is a masterpiece, this Cosette! She is a very little girl and a very great

lady. She will be only a baroness, that is stooping; she was born a marchioness. Hasn't she lashes for you? My children, fix it well in your noddles that you are in the right of it. Love one another. Be foolish about it. Love is the foolishness of men and the wisdom of God. Adore each other. Only," added he, suddenly darkening, "what a misfortune! This is what I am thinking of! More than half of what I have is in annuity; as long as I live, it's all well enough, but after my death, twenty years from now, ah, my poor children, you will not have a sou. Your beautiful white hands, Mme. l'Baroness, will do the devil the honor to pull him by the tail."

Here a grave and tranquil voice was heard, which said: "Mdlle. Euphrasie Fauchelevent has 600,000 francs."

It was Jean Valjean's voice.

He had not yet uttered a word, nobody seemed even to remember that he was there, and he stood erect and motionless behind all these happy people.

"How is Mdlle. Euphrasie in question?" asked the grandfather, startled.

"That is me," answered Cosette.

"Six hundred thousand francs!" resumed M. Gillenormand.

"Less 14,000 or 15,000 francs, perhaps," said Jean Valjean.

And he laid on the table the package which Aunt Gillenormand had taken for a book.

Jean Valjean opened the package himself; it was a bundle of banknotes. They ran through them and they counted them. There were 500 bills of 1,000 francs and 168 of 500 francs. In all, 584,000 francs.

"That is a good book," said M. Gillenormand.

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" murmured the aunt.

"This arranges things very well, does it not, Mdlle. Gillenormand the elder?" resumed the grandfather. "This devil of a Marius, he has found you a grisette millionaire on the tree of dreams! Then trust in the love-making of young folks nowadays! Students find studentesses with 600,000 francs. Chérubin works better than Rothschild."

"Five hundred and eighty-four thousand francs!" repeated Mdlle. Gillenormand in an undertone. "Five

hundred and eighty-four thousand francs! you might call it 600,000 francs, indeed!"

As for Marius and Cosette, they were looking at each other during this time; they paid little attention to this incident.

## V

DEPOSIT YOUR MONEY RATHER IN SOME FOREST THAN  
WITH SOME NOTARY

THE reader has doubtless understood, without it being necessary to explain at length, that Jean Valjean, after the Champmathieu affair, had been able, thanks to his first escape for a few days, to come to Paris, and to withdraw the sum made by him, under the name of M. Madeleine, at M— sur M—, from Laffitte's in time; and in the fear of being retaken, which happened to him, in fact, a short time after, he had concealed and buried that sum in the forest of Montfermeil, in the place called the Blaru grounds. The sum, 630,000 francs, all in banknotes, was of small bulk, and was contained in a box; but to preserve the box from moisture, he had placed it in an oaken chest, full of chestnut shavings. In the same chest he had put his other treasure, the bishop's candlesticks. It will be remembered that he carried away these candlesticks when he escaped from M— sur M—. The man perceived one evening, for the first time, by Boulatruelle, was Jean Valjean. Afterward, whenever Jean Valjean was in need of money, he went to the Blaru glade for it. Hence the absences of which we have spoken. He had a pickaxe somewhere in the bushes, in a hiding-place known only to himself. When he saw Marius convalescent, feeling that the hour was approaching when this money might be useful, he had gone after it; and it was he again whom Boulatruelle saw in the wood, but this time in the morning, and not at night. Boulatruelle inherited the pickaxe.

The real sum was 584,500 francs. Jean Valjean took out the 500 francs for himself. "We will see afterward," thought he.

The difference between this sum and the 630,000 francs withdrawn from Laffitte's represented the expenses of ten



years, from 1823 to 1833. The five years spent in the convent had cost only 5,000 francs.

Jean Valjean put the two silver candlesticks upon the mantel, where they shone, to Toussaint's great admiration.

Moreover, Jean Valjean knew that he was delivered from Javert. It had been mentioned in his presence, and he had verified the fact in the *Moniteur*, which published it, that an inspector of police, named Javert, had been found drowned under a washerwoman's boat between the Pont au Change and the Pont Neuf, and that a paper left by this man, otherwise irreproachable and highly esteemed by his chiefs, led to a belief that he had committed suicide during a fit of mental aberration. "In fact," thought Jean Valjean, "since having me in his power, he let me go, he must already have been crazy."

## VI

THE TWO OLD MEN DO EVERYTHING, EACH IN HIS OWN WAY, THAT COSETTE MAY BE HAPPY

ALL the preparations were made for the marriage. The physician being consulted, said that it might take place in February. This was in December. Some ravishing weeks of perfect happiness rolled away.

The least happy was not the grandfather. He would remain for a quarter of an hour at a time gazing at Cosette.

"The wonderful pretty girl!" he exclaimed. "And her manners are so sweet and so good. It is of no use to say, my love, my heart, she is the most charming girl that I have seen in my life. Besides, she will have virtues for you sweet as violets. She is a grace, indeed! You can but live nobly with such a creature. Marius, my boy, you are a baron, you are rich, don't pettifog, I beg of you."

Cosette and Marius had passed abruptly from the grave to paradise. There had been but little caution in the transition, and they would have been stunned if they had not been dazzled.

"Do you understand anything about it?" said Marius to Cosette.

"No!" answered Cosette; "but it seems to me that the good God is caring for us."

Jean Valjean did all, smoothed all, conciliated all, made all easy. He hastened toward Cosette's happiness with as much eagerness, and apparently as much joy, as Cosette herself.

As he had been a mayor he knew how to solve a delicate problem, in a secret of which he was alone: Cosette's civil state. To bluntly give her origin, who knows? that might prevent the marriage. He drew Cosette out of all difficulty. He arranged a family of dead people for her, a sure means of incurring no objection. Cosette was what remained of an extinct family; Cosette was not his daughter, but the daughter of another Fauchelevant. Two brothers Fauchelevant had been gardeners at the convent of the Petit Picpus. They went to this convent, the best recommendations and the most respectable testimonials abounded; the good nuns, little apt and little inclined to fathom questions of paternity, and understanding no malice, had never known very exactly of which of the two Fauchelevants little Cosette was the daughter. They said what was wanted of them, and said it with zeal. A notary's act was drawn up. Cosette became before the law Mdlle. Euphrasie Fauchelevant. She was declared an orphan. Jean Valjean arranged matters in such a way as to be designated, under the name of Fauchelevant, as Cosette's guardian, with M. Gillenormand as overseeing guardian.

As for the 584,000 francs, that was a legacy left to Cosette by a dead person who desired to remain unknown. The original legacy had been 594,000 francs; but 10,000 francs had been expended for Mdlle. Euphrasie's education, of which 5,000 francs were paid to the convent itself. This legacy, deposited in the hands of a third party, was to be given up to Cosette at her majority or at the time of her marriage. Altogether this was very acceptable, as we see, especially with a basis of more than 500,000 francs. There were, indeed, a few singularities here and there, but nobody saw them; one of those intersted had his eyes bandaged by love, the other by the 600,000 francs.

Cosette learned that she was not the daughter of that old man whom she had so long called father. He was only a relative; another Fauchelevant was her real father. At any other time this would have broken her heart. But at this ineffable hour it was only a little shadow, a dark-

ening, and she had so much joy that this cloud was of short duration. She had Marius. The young man came, the good man faded away; such is life.

And then, Cosette had been accustomed for long years to see enigmas about her; everybody who has had a mysterious childhood is always ready for certain renunciations.

She continued, however, to say "Father" to Jean Valjean.

Cosette, in raptures, was enthusiastic about Grandfather Gillenormand. It is true that he loaded her with madrigals and with presents. While Jean Valjean was building a normal condition in society for Cosette and a possession of an unimpeachable state, M. Gillenormand was watching over the wedding corbeille. Nothing amused him so much as being magnificent. He had given Cosette a dress of Binche guipure which descended to him from his own grandmother. "These fashions have come round again," said he; "old things are the rage, and the young women of my old age dress like the old women of my childhood."

He rifled his respectable round-bellied bureaus of Coromandel lac which had not been opened for years. "Let us put these dowagers to the confession," said he; "let us see what they have in them." He noisily stripped the deep drawers full of the toilets of all his wives, of all his mistresses, and of all his ancestresses. Pekins, damasks, lampas, painted moires, dresses of gros de Tours, Indian handkerchiefs embroidered with a gold which could be washed, dauphines in the piece finished on both sides, Genoa and Alençon point, antique jewelry, comfit boxes of ivory ornamented with microscopic battles, clothes, ribbons—he lavished all upon Cosette. Cosette, astonished, desperately in love with Marius and wild with gratitude toward M. Gillenormand, dreamed of a boundless happiness clad in satin and velvet. Her wedding corbeille appeared to her upborne by seraphim. Her soul soared into the azure on the wings of Mechlin lace.

The intoxication of the lovers was only equaled, as we have said, by the ecstasy of the grandfather. It was like a flourish of trumpets in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire.

Every morning a new offering of finery from the grand-



father to Cosette. Every possible furbelow blossomed out splendidly about her.

One day Marius, who was fond of talking gravely in the midst of his happiness, said in reference to I know not what incident:

"The men of the Revolution are so great that they already have the prestige of centuries, like Cato and like Phocion, and each of them seems a *mémoire antique* [antique memory]."

"Moire antique!" exclaimed the old man. "Thank you, Marius. That is precisely the idea that I was in search of."

And the next day a magnificent dress of tea-colored moire antique was added to Cosette's corbeille.

The grandfather extracted a wisdom from these rags.

"Love, all very well; but it needs that with it. The useless is needed in happiness. Happiness is only the essential. Season it for me enormously with the superfluous. A palace and her heart. Her heart and the Louvre. Her heart and the grand fountains of Versailles. Give me my shepherdess and have her a duchess if possible. Bring me Phyllis crowned with bluebells, and add to her 100,000 francs a year. Open me a bucolic out of sight under a marble colonnade. I consent to the bucolic, and also to the fairy work in marble and gold. Dry happiness is like dry bread. We eat, but we do not dine. I wish for the superfluous, for the useless, for the extravagant, for the too much, for that which is not good for anything. I remember having seen in the cathedral of Strasbourg a clock as high as a three-story house, which marked the hour, which had the goodness to mark the hour, but which did not look as if it were made for that; and which, after having struck noon or midnight—noon, the hour of the sun, midnight, the hour of love, or any other hour that you please—gave you the moon and the stars, the earth and the sea, the birds and the fish, Phœbus and Phœbe, and a host of things which came out of a niche, and the twelve apostles, and the Emperor Charles V, and Eponine and Sabinus, and a crowd of little gilded good men who played on the trumpet to boot. Not counting the ravishing chimes which it flung out into the air on all occasions without anybody knowing why. Is a paltry naked dial, which only tells the hours, as good as

that? For my part, I agree with the great clock of Strasbourg, and I prefer it to the cuckoo clock of the Black Forest."

M. Gillenormand raved especially concerning the wedding, and all the pier-glasses of the eighteenth century passed pell-mell through his dithyrambs.

"You know nothing about the art of fêtes. You do not know how to get up a happy day in these times," he exclaimed. "Your nineteenth century is soft. It lacks excess. It ignores the rich, it ignores the noble. In everything it is shaven close. Your third estate is tasteless, colorless, odorless, and shapeless. Dreams of your bourgeoisies who set up an establishment, as they say. A pretty boudoir freshly decorated in palissandre and chintz. Room! room! the sieur Hunks espouses the lady Catchpenny. Sumptuosity and splendor. They have stuck a louis-d'or to a taper. There you have the age. I beg to flee away beyond the Sarmatians. Ah! in 1787 I predicted that all was lost, the day I saw the Duke de Rohan, Prince de Léon, Duke de Chabot, Duke de Montbazan, Marquis de Soubise, Viscount de Thouars, peer of France, go to Longchamps in a chaise-cart. That has borne its fruits. In this century people do business, they gamble at the bourse, they make money, and they are disagreeable. They care for and varnish their surface, they are spruced up, washed, soaped, scraped, shaved, combed, waxed, smoothed, rubbed, brushed, cleaned on the outside, irreproachable, polished like a pebble, prudent, nice, and at the same time, by the virtue of my mistress, they have at the bottom of their conscience dung-heaps and cloacas enough to disgust a cow-girl who blows her nose with her fingers. I grant to these times this device; nasty neatness. Marius, don't get angry; let me speak; I speak no evil of the people, you see; I have my mouth full of your people; but take it not amiss that I have my little fling at the bourgeoisie. I am one of them. Who loves well, lashes well. Upon that, I say it boldly, people marry nowadays, but they don't know how to marry. Ah! it is true, I regret the pretty ways of the old times. I regret the whole of them. That elegance, that chivalry, those courtly and dainty ways, that joyous luxury which everybody had, music making part of the wedding, symphony

above, drumming below, dances, joyful faces at table, far-fetched madrigals, songs, squibs, free laughter, the devil and his train, big knots of ribbon. I regret the bride's garter. The bride's garter is cousin to the cestus of Venus. Upon what turns the war of Troy? By heavens, upon Helen's garter. Why do they fight, why does Diomedes the divine shatter that great bronze helmet with ten points on Meriones' head, why do Achilles and Hector pick each other with great pike thrusts? Because Helen let Paris take her garter. With Cosette's garter Homer would make the 'Iliad.' He would put into his poem an old babbler like me, and he would call him Nestor. My friends, formerly, in that lovely formerly, people married scientifically; they made a good contract, then a good jollification. As soon as Cujas went out Gamache came in. But, forsooth! the stomach is an agreeable animal which demands its due, and which wants its wedding also. They supped well, and they had a beautiful neighbor at table, without a stomacher, who hid her neck but moderately! Oh! the wide laughing mouths, and how gay they were in those times! Youth was a bouquet; every young man terminated in a branch of lilac or a bunch of roses; was one a warrior, he was a shepherd; and if, by chance, he was a captain of dragoons, he found some way to be called Florian. They thought everything of being pretty, they embroidered themselves, they empurpled themselves. A bourgeois had the appearance of a flower, a marquis had the appearance of a precious stone. They did not wear straps, they did not wear boots. They were flaunting, glossy, moire, gorgeous, fluttering, dainty, coquettish, which did not prevent them from having a sword at their side. The humming-bird has beak and claws. That was the time of the *Indes galantes*. One of the sides of the century was the delicate, the other was the magnificent; and, zookers! they amused themselves. Nowadays they are serious. The bourgeois is miserly, the bourgeoisie is prudish; your century is unfortunate. People would drive away the graces for wearing such low necks. Alas! they hide beauty as a deformity. Since the Revolution, everything has trousers, even the ballet-girls; a danseuse must be grave; your rigadoons are doctrinaire. We must be majestic. We should be very much shocked without our



chin in our cravat. The ideal of a scapegrace of twenty who gets married is to be like M. Royer-Collard. And do you know to what we are coming with this majesty? to being small. Learn this: joy is not merely joyful; it is great. So be lovers gayly then, the devil! and marry, when you do marry, with the fever and the dizziness and the uproar and the tohubohu of happiness. Gravity at the church, all right. But, as soon as Mass is over, odzooks! we must make a dream whirl about the bride. A marriage ought to be royal and chimerical; it ought to walk in procession from the cathedral of Rheims to the pagoda of Chanteloup. I have a horror of a mean wedding. 'Zblews! be in Olympus, at least for that day. Be gods. Ah! you might be sylphs, games, and laughters, argyraspides; you are elfs! My friends, every new husband ought to be the Prince Aldobrandini. Profit by this unique moment of your life to fly away into the empyrean with the swans and the eagles, free to fall back on the morrow into the bourgeoisie of the frogs. Don't economize upon Hymen; don't strip him of his splendors; don't stint the day on which you shine. Wedding is not housekeeping. Oh! if I had my fancy, it should be gallant; you should hear violins in the trees. This is my programme: sky-blue and silver. I would join the rural divinities in the fête; I would convoke the dryads and the nereids. Nuptials of Amphitrite, a rosy cloud, nymphs with well-dressed heads, and all naked; an academician offering quatrains to the goddess; a car drawn by marine monsters.

“Tritton trottaient devant, et tirait de sa conque  
Des sons si ravissants qu'il ravissait quiconque.”

There is a programme for a fête that is one, or I don't know anything about it, udsbuddikins!”

While the grandfather, in full lyric effusion, was listening to himself, Cosette and Marius were intoxicated with seeing each other freely.

Aunt Gillenormand beheld it all with her imperturbable placidity. She had had within five or six months a certain number of emotions; Marius returned, Marius brought back bleeding, Marius brought back from a barricade, Marius dead, then alive, Marius reconciled, Marius betrothed, Marius marrying a pauper, Marius marrying a millionaire. The 600,000 francs had been her last sur-

prise. Then her first communicant indifference returned to her. She went regularly to the offices, picked over her rosary, read her prayer-book, whispered *Aves* in one part of the house, while they were whispering *I love yous* in the other, and, vaguely, saw Marius and Cosette as two shadows. The shadow was herself.

There is a certain condition of inert asceticism in which the soul, neutralized by torpor, a stranger to what might be called the business of living, perceives, with the exception of earthquakes and catastrophes, no human impressions, neither pleasant impressions nor painful impressions. "This devotion," said Grandfather Gillenormand to his daughter, "corresponds to a cold in the head. You smell nothing of life. No bad odor, but no good one."

Still, the 600,000 francs had determined the hesitation of the old maid. Her father had acquired the habit of counting her for so little that he had not consulted her in regard to the consent to Marius' marriage. He had acted with impetuosity, according to his wont, having, a despot become a slave, but one thought—to satisfy Marius. As for the aunt, that the aunt existed, and that she might have an opinion, he had not even thought; and, perfect sheep as she was, this had ruffled her. A little rebellious inwardly, but outwardly impassible, she said to herself: "My father settles the question of the marriage without me, I will settle the question of the inheritance without him." She was rich, in fact, and her father was not. She had, therefore, reserved her decision thereupon. It is probable that, if the marriage had been poor, she would have left it poor. So much the worse for monsieur, my nephew! He marries a beggar, let him be a beggar. But Cosette's 600,000 francs pleased the aunt, and changed her feelings in regard to this pair of lovers. Some consideration is due to 600,000 francs, and it was clear that she could not do otherwise than leave her fortune to these young people, since they no longer needed it.

It was arranged that the couple should live with the grandfather. M. Gillenormand absolutely insisted upon giving them his room, the finest in the house. "It will rejuvenate me," he declared. "It is an old project. I always had the idea of making a wedding in my room." He filled this room with a profusion of gay old furniture.

He hung the walls and the ceiling with an extraordinary stuff which he had in the piece, and which he believed to be from Utrecht, a satin background with golden immortelles and velvet auriculas. "With this stuff," said he, "the Duchess d'Anville's bed was draped at La Roche Guyon." He put a little Saxony figure on the mantel, holding a muff over her naked belly.

M. Gillenormand's library became the attorney's office, which Marius required; an office, it will be remembered, being rendered necessary by the rules of the order.

## VII

### THE EFFECTS OF DREAM MINGLED WITH HAPPINESS

THE lovers saw each other every day. Cosette came with M. Fauchelevant. "It is reversing the order of things," said Mdlle. Gillenormand, "that the intended should come to the house to be courted like this." But Marius' convalescence had led to the habit, and the arm-chairs in the Rue des Filles du Calvaire—better for long talks than the straw chairs of the Rue de l'Homme Armé—had rooted it. Marius and M. Fauchelevant saw one another, but did not speak to each other. That seemed to be understood. Every girl needs a chaperon. Cosette could not have come without M. Fauchelevant. To Marius, M. Fauchelevant was the condition of Cosette. He accepted it. In bringing upon the carpet, vaguely and generally, matters of policy, from the point of view of the general amelioration of the lot of all, they succeeded in saying a little more than yes and no to each other. Once, on the subject of education, which Marius wished gratuitous and obligatory, multiplied under all forms, lavished upon all like the air and the sunshine, in one word, respirable by the entire people, they fell into unison and almost into a conversation. Marius remarked on this occasion that M. Fauchelevant talked well, and even with a certain elevation of language. There was, however, something wanting. M. Fauchelevant had something less than a man of the world and something more.

Marius, inwardly and in the depth of his thought, surrounded this M. Fauchelevant, who was to him simply



benevolent and cold, with all sorts of silent questions. There came to him at intervals doubts about his own recollections. In his memory there was a hole, a blank place, an abyss scooped out by four months of agony. Many things were lost in it. He was led to ask himself if it were really true that he had seen M. Fauchelevent—such a man, so serious and so calm—in the barricade.

This was not, however, the only stupor which the appearances and the disappearances of the past had left in his mind. We must not suppose that he was delivered from all those obsessions of the memory which force us, even when happy, even when satisfied, to look back with melancholy. The head which does not turn toward the horizons of the past contains neither thought nor love. At moments, Marius covered his face with his hands, and the vague past tumultuously traversed the twilight which filled his brain. He saw Mabeuf fall again, he heard Gavroche singing beneath the grape, he felt upon his lips the chill of Eponine's forehead; Enjolras, Courfeyrac, Jean Prouvaire, Combeferre, Bossuet, Grantaire, all his friends, rose up before him, then dissipated. All these beings, dear, sorrowful, valiant, charming, or tragical, were they dreams? had they really existed? The émeute had wrapped everything in its smoke. These great fevers have great dreams. He interrogated himself; he groped within himself; he was dizzy with all these vanished realities. Where were they all then? Was it indeed true that all were dead? A fall into the darkness had carried off all except himself. It all seemed to him to have disappeared as if behind a curtain at a theatre. There are such curtains which drop down in life. God is passing to the next act.

And himself, was he really the same man? He, the poor, he was rich; he, the abandoned, he had a family; he, the despairing, he was marrying Cosette. It seemed to him that he had passed through a tomb, and that he had gone in black, and that he had come out white. And in this tomb the others had remained. At certain moments all these beings of the past, returned, and present, formed a circle about him and rendered him gloomy; then he thought of Cosette, and again became serene; but it required nothing less than this felicity to efface this catastrophe.

M. Fauchelevent almost had a place among these vanished beings. Marius hesitated to believe that the Fauchelevent of the barricade was the same as this Fauchelevent in flesh and blood, so gravely seated near Cosette. The first was probably one of those nightmares coming and going with his hours of delirium. Moreover, their two natures showing a steep front to each other, no question was possible from Marius to M. Fauchelevent. The idea of it did not even occur to him. We have already indicated this characteristic circumstance.

Two men who have a common secret, and who, by a sort of tacit agreement, do not exchange a word upon the subject, such a thing is less rare than one would think.

Once only Marius made an attempt. He brought the Rue de la Chanvrerie into the conversation, and, turning toward M. Fauchelevent, he said to him:

"You are well acquainted with that street?"

"What street?"

"The Rue de la Chanvrerie."

"I have no idea of the name of that street," answered M. Fauchelevent in the most natural tone in the world.

The answer, which bore upon the name of the street and not upon the street itself, appeared to Marius more conclusive than it was.

"Decidedly," thought he, "I have been dreaming. I have had a hallucination. It was somebody who resembled him. M. Fauchelevent was not there."

## VIII

### TWO MEN IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND

THE enchantment, great as it was, did not efface other preoccupations from Marius' mind.

During the preparations for the marriage, and while waiting for the time fixed upon, he had some difficult and careful retrospective researches made.

He owed gratitude on several sides; he owed some on his father's account; he owed some on his own.

There was Thenardier; there was the unknown man who had brought him, Marius, to M. Gillenormand's.

Marius persisted in trying to find these two men, not intending to marry, to be happy and to forget them, and

fearing lest these debts of duty unpaid might cast a shadow over his life, so luminous henceforth. It was impossible for him to leave all these arrears unsettled behind him; and he wished, before entering joyously into the future, to have a quittance from the past.

That Thenardier was a scoundrel took away nothing from this fact that he had saved Colonel Pontmercy. Thenardier was a bandit to everybody except Marius.

And Marius, ignorant of the real scene of the battle-field of Waterloo, did not know this peculiarity, that his father was, with reference to Thenardier, in this singular situation: he owed his life to him without owing him any thanks.

None of the various agents whom Marius employed succeeded in finding Thenardier's track. Effacement seemed complete on that side. The Thenardiess had died in prison pending the examination on the charge. Thenardier and his daughter Azelma, the two who alone remained of that woful group, had plunged back into the shadow. The gulf of the social unknown had silently closed over these beings. There could no longer even be seen on the surface that quivering, that trembling, those obscure concentric circles which announce that something has fallen there and that we may cast in the lead.

The Thenardiess being dead, Boulatruelle being put out of the case, Claquesous having disappeared, the principal accused having escaped from prison, the prosecution for the ambushade at the Gorbeau House was almost abortive. The affair was left in deep obscurity. The Court of Assizes was obliged to content itself with two subalterns, Panchaud, alias Printanier, alias Bigrenaille, and Demi-Liard, alias Deux Milliards, who were tried and condemned to ten years at the galleys. Hard labor for life was pronounced against their accomplices, who had escaped and did not appear. Thenardier, chief and ringleader, was, also for non-appearance, condemned to death. This condemnation was the only thing which remained in regard to Thenardier, throwing over that buried name its ominous glare, like a candle beside a bier.

Moreover, by crowding Thenardier back into the lowest depths, for fear of being retaken, this condemnation added to the thick darkness which covered this man.



As for the other, as for the unknown man who had saved Marius, the researches at first had some result, then stopped short. They succeeded in finding the fiacre which had brought Marius to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire on the evening of the 6th of June. The driver declared that on the 6th of June, by order of a police officer, he had been "stationed," from three o'clock in the afternoon until night, on the quay of the Champs Elysées, above the outlet of the Grand sewer; that, about nine o'clock in the evening, the grating of the sewer, which overlooks the river beach, was opened; that a man came out, carrying another man on his shoulders, who seemed to be dead; that the officer, who was watching at that point, arrested the living man and seized the dead man; that, on the order of the officer, he, the driver, received "all those people" into the fiacre; that they went first to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; that they left the dead man there; that the dead man was M. Marius, and that he, the driver, recognized him plainly, although he was alive "this time"; that they then got into his carriage again; that he whipped up his horses; that, within a few steps of the door of the Archives, he had been called to stop; that there, in the street, he had been paid and left, and that the officer took away the other man; that he knew nothing more; that the night was very dark.

Marius, we have said, recollected nothing. He merely remembered having been seized from behind by a vigorous hand at the moment he fell backward into the barricade, then all became a blank to him. He had recovered consciousness only at M. Gillenormand's.

He was lost in conjectures.

He could not doubt his own identity. How did it come about, however, that, falling into the Rue de la Chanvrière, he had been picked up by the police officer on the banks of the Seine, near the Pont des Invalides? Somebody had carried him from the quartier of the markets to the Champs Elysées. And how? By the sewer. Unparalleled devotion!

Somebody. Who?

It was this man whom Marius sought.

Of this man, who was his savior, nothing; no trace; not the least indication.

Marius, although compelled to great reserve in this re-

spect, pushed his researches as far as the prefecture of police. There, no more than elsewhere, did the information obtained lead to any *eclaircissement*. The prefecture knew less than the driver of the fiacre. They had no knowledge of any arrest made on the 6th of June at the grating of the Grand sewer; they had received no officer's report upon that fact, which, at the prefecture, was regarded as a fable. They attributed the invention of this fable to the driver. A driver who wants drink-money is capable of anything, even of imagination. The thing was certain, for all that, and Marius could not doubt it, unless by doubting his own identity, as we have just said.

Everything, in this strange enigma, was inexplicable.

This man, this mysterious man, whom the driver had seen come out of the grating of the Grand sewer bearing Marius senseless upon his back, and whom the police officer on the watch had arrested in the very act of saving an insurgent, what had become of him? What had become of the officer himself? Why had this officer kept silence? Had the man succeeded in escaping? had he bribed the officer? Why did this man give no sign of life to Marius, who owed everything to him? His disinterestedness was not less wonderful than his devotion. Why did not this man reappear? Perhaps he was above recompense, but nobody is above gratitude. Was he dead? what kind of a man was this? how did he look? Nobody could tell. The driver answered: "The night was very dark." Basque and Nicolette, in their amazement, had only looked at their young master covered with blood. The porter, whose candle had lighted the tragic arrival of Marius, alone had noticed the man in question, and this is the description which he gave of him: "This man was horrible."

In the hope of deriving aid in his researches from them, Marius had had preserved the bloody clothes which he wore when he was brought back to his grandfather's. On examining the coat, it was noticed that one skirt was oddly torn. A piece was missing.

One evening Marius spoke, before Cosette and Jean Valjean, of all this singular adventure, of the numberless inquiries which he had made and of the uselessness of his efforts. The cold countenance of "Monsieur Fauchelevent" made him impatient. He exclaimed with a vivacity,

which had almost the resonant vibration of anger: "Yes, that man, whoever he may be, was sublime. Do you know what he did, monsieur? He intervened like the archangel. He must have thrown himself into the midst of the combat, have snatched me out of it, have opened the sewer, have drawn me into it, have borne me through it! He must have made his way for more than four miles through hideous subterranean galleries, bent, stooping, in the darkness, in the cloaca, more than four miles, monsieur! with a corpse upon his back! And with what object? With the single object of saving that corpse. And that corpse was I. He said to himself: 'There is, perhaps, a glimmer of life still there; I will risk my own life for that miserable spark!' And his life, he did not risk it once, but twenty times! And each step was a danger. The proof is, that on coming out of a sewer he was arrested. Do you know, monsieur, that that man did all that? And he could expect no recompense. What was I? An insurgent. What was I? A vanquished man. Oh! if Cosette's 600,000 francs were mine—"

"They are yours," interrupted Jean Valjean.

"Well," resumed Marius, "I would give them to find that man!"

Jean Valjean kept silence.

## BOOK SIXTH—THE WHITE NIGHT

### I

THE 16TH OF FEBRUARY, 1833

THE night of the 16th of February, 1833, was a blessed night. Above its shade the heavens were opened. It was the wedding-night of Marius and Cosette.

The day had been adorable.

It had not been the sky-blue festival dreamed by the grandfather, a fairy scene with a confusion of cherubs and cupids above the heads of the married pair, a marriage worthy a frieze panel; but it had been sweet and mirthful. The fashion of marriage was not in 1833 what it is to-day. France had not yet borrowed from England that supreme delicacy of eloping with one's wife, of making one's escape



on leaving the church of hiding one's self, ashamed of one's happiness, and of combining the behavior of a bankrupt with the transports of Solomon's song. They had not yet learned all that there is chaste, exquisite and decent, in jolting one's paradise in a post-chaise, in intersecting one's mystery with click-clacks, in taking a tavern bed for a nuptial bed, and in leaving behind, in the common alcove, at so much a night, the most sacred of life's memories pell-mell with the interviews between the diligence conductor and the servant-girl of the tavern.

In this second half of the nineteenth century in which we live, the mayor and his scarf, the priest and his chasuble, the law and God, are not enough; we must complete them with the Longjumeau postilion, blue waistcoat with red facings and bell-buttons; a plate for a vambrace, breeches of green leather, oaths at Norman horses with knotted tails, imitation galloon, tarpaulin hat, coarse powdered hair, enormous whip and heavy boots. France does not yet push elegance so far as to have, like the English nobility, a hailstorm of slippers down at the heel and old shoes beating upon the bridal post-chaise, in memory of Churchill, afterward Marlborough, or Malbrouck, who was assailed on the day of his marriage by the anger of an aunt, who brought him good luck. The old shoes and the slippers do not yet form a part of our nuptial celebrations; but patience, good taste continuing to spread, we shall come to it.

In 1733, one hundred years ago, marriage was not performed at a full trot.

It was still imagined at that day, strange to tell, that a marriage is an intimate and social festival; that a patriarchal banquet does not spoil a domestic solemnity; that gayety, even excessive, provided it be seemly, does no harm to happiness; and finally, that it is venerable and good that the fusion of these two destinies, whence a family is to arise, should commence in the house, and that the household should have the nuptial chamber for a witness henceforth.

And they had the shamelessness to be married at home.

The marriage took place, therefore, according to that now obsolete fashion, at M. Gillenormand's.

Natural and ordinary as this matter of marriage may

be, the bans to be published, the deeds to be drawn up, the maire, the church, always render it somewhat complex. They could not be ready before the 16th of February.

Now, we mention this circumstance for the pure satisfaction of being exact, it happened that the 16th was Mardi Gras. Hesitations, scruples, particularly from Aunt Gillenormand.

"Mardi Gras!" exclaimed the grandfather. "So much the better. There is a proverb:

" 'Mariage un Mardi Gras,  
N'aura points d'enfants ingrats.' "

"Let us go on. Here goes for the 16th. Do you want it put off, you, Marius?"

"Certainly not!" answered the lover.

"Let us get married," said the grandfather.

So the marriage took place on the 16th, notwithstanding the public gayety. It rained that day, but there is always a little patch of blue in the sky at the service of happiness, which lovers see, even though the rest of creation be under an umbrella.

On the previous evening Jean Valjean had handed to Marius, in presence of M. Gillenormand, the 584,000 francs.

The marriage being performed under the law of community, the deeds were simple.

Toussaint was henceforth useless to Jean Valjean; Cosette had inherited her and had promoted her to the rank of waiting-maid.

As for Jean Valjean, there was a beautiful room in the Gillenormand house furnished expressly for him, and Cosette had said to him so irresistibly: "Father, I pray you," that she had made him almost promise that he would come and occupy it.

A few days before the day fixed for the marriage an accident happened to Jean Valjean: he slightly bruised the thumb of his right hand. It was not serious; and he had allowed nobody to take any trouble about it, nor to dress it, nor even to see his hurt, not even Cosette. It compelled him to muffle his hand in a bandage however, and to carry his arm in a sling, and prevented his signing any-

thing. M. Gillenormand, as Cosette's overseeing guardian, took his place.

We shall take the reader neither to the maire nor to the church. We hardly follow two lovers as far as that, and we generally turn our back upon the drama as soon as it puts the bridegroom's bouquet into its buttonhole. We shall merely mention an incident which, although unnoticed by the wedding party, marked its progress from the Rue des Filles du Calvaire to St. Paul's.

They were repaving at that time the northern extremity of the Rue St. Louis. It was fenced off where it leaves the Rue du Parc Royal. It was impossible for the wedding carriages to go directly to St. Paul's. It was necessary to change the route, and the shortest way was to turn off by the boulevard. One of the guests observed that it was Mardi Gras, and that the boulevard would be encumbered with carriages. "Why?" asked M. Gillenormand. "On account of the masks." "Capital!" said the grandfather; "let us go that way. These young folks are marrying; they are going to enter upon the serious things of life. It will prepare them for it to see a bit of masquerade."

They went by the boulevard. The first of the wedding carriages contained Cosette and Aunt Gillenormand, M. Gillenormand, and Jean Valjean. Marius, still separated from his betrothed, according to the custom, did not come till the second. The nuptial cortège, on leaving the Rue des Filles du Calvaire, was involved in the long procession of carriages which made an endless chain from the Madeleine to the Bastille and from the Bastille to the Madeleine.

Masks abounded on the boulevard. It was of no avail that it rained at intervals; pantaloon and harlequin were obstinate. In the good-humor of that winter of 1833 Paris had disguised herself as Venice. We see no such Mardi Gras nowadays. Everything being an expanded carnival, there is no longer any carnival.

The cross-alleys were choked with passers, and the windows with the curious. The terraces which crown the peristyles of the theatres were lined with spectators. Besides the masks, they beheld that row, peculiar to Mardi Gras as well as to Longchamps, of vehicles of all sorts, hackney coaches, spring carts, carry-alls, cabriolets, moving in order, rigorously riveted to one another by the regu-



lations of the police, and, as it were, running in grooves. Whoever is in one of these vehicles is, at the same time, spectator and spectacle. Sergeants-de-ville kept those two interminable parallel files on the lower sides of the boulevard moving with a contrary motion, and watched, so that nothing should hinder their double current, over those two streams of carriages flowing, the one down, the other up, the one toward the Chaussée d'Antin, the other toward the Faubourg St. Antoine. The emblazoned carriages of the peers of France, and the ambassadors, kept the middle of the roadway, going and coming freely. Certain magnificent and joyous cortéges, especially the Fat Ox, had the same privilege. In this gayety of Paris, England cracked her whip; the post-chaise of Lord Seymour, teased with a nickname by the populace, passed along with a great noise.

In the double file, along which galloped some municipal guards like shepherd's dogs, honest family carry-alls, loaded down with great-aunts and grandmothers, exhibited at their doors fresh groups of disguised children, clowns of seven, clownesses of six, charming little creatures, feeling that they were officially a portion of the public mirth, penetrated with the dignity of their harlequinade, and displaying the gravity of functionaries.

From time to time there was a block somewhere in the procession of vehicles; one or the other of the two lateral files stopped until the knot was disentangled; one carriage obstructed was enough to paralyze the whole line. Then they resumed their course.

The wedding carriages were in the file, going toward the Bastille, and moving along the right side of the boulevard. At the Rue du Pont aux Choux there was a stop for a time. Almost at the same instant, on the other side, the other file, which was going toward the Madeleine, also stopped. There was at this point of that file a carriage-load of masks.

These carriages, or, to speak more correctly, these cart-loads of masks, are well known to the Parisians. If they failed on a Mardi Gras, or a Mid-Lent, people suspected something, and they would say: "There is something at the bottom of that. Probably the ministry is going to change." A heaping up of cassandras, harlequins and columbines, jolted above the passer-by, every possible gro-

tesqueness from the Turk to the savage, Hercules supporting marchionesses, jades who would make Rabelais stop his ears even as the Bacchantes made Aristophanes cast down his eyes; flax wigs, rosy swaddling-bands, coxcombs' hats, cross-eyed spectacles, Janot cocked hats teased by a butterfly, shouts thrown to the foot-passengers, arms akimbo, bold postures, naked shoulders, masked faces, unmuzzled shamelessness; a chaos of effrontery marshaled by a driver crowned with flowers; such is this institution.

Greece required the chariot of Thespis. France requires the fiacre of Vadé.

Everything may be parodied, even parody. The saturnalia, that grimace of the ancient beauty, has gradually grown to Mardi Gras; and the bacchanal, formerly crowned with vine branches, inundated with sunlight, showing bosoms of marble in a divine half-nudity, to-day grown flabby under the soaking rags of the north, has ended by calling herself the *chie-en-lit*.

The tradition of the carriages of masks goes back to the oldest times of the monarchy. The accounts of Louis XI allow to the bailiff of the palace "twenty sous tournois for three masquerade coaches at the street corners." In our days these noisy crowds of creatures are commonly carted by some ancient van, the top of which they load down, or overwhelm with their tumultuous group an excise cart whose cover is broken in. There are twenty of them in a carriage for six. They are on the seat, on the stool, on the bows of the cover, on the pole. They even get astride of the carriage lanterns. They are standing, lying, sitting, feet curled up, legs hanging; the women occupy the knees of the men. Their mad pyramid can be seen from a distance above the swarming heads. These carriage-loads make mountains of mirth in the midst of the mob. Collé Panard and Piron flow from them, enriched with argot. They spit the Billingsgate catechism down upon the people. This fiacre, become measureless by its load, has an air of conquest. Uproar is in front, Tohubohu is in the rear. They vociferate, they vocalize, they howl, they burst, they writhe with happiness: gayety bellows, sarcasm flames, joviality spreads itself as if it were purple; two haridans lead on the farce, which expands into apotheosis; it was the car of laughter.

Laughter too cynical to be free. And, in fact, this laughter is suspicious. This laughter has a mission. Its business is to prove the carnival to the Parisians.

These Billingsgate wagons, in which we feel an indefinable darkness, make the philosopher think. There is something of government therein. In them we lay our finger upon a mysterious affinity between public men and public women.

That turpitudes heaped up should give a total of gayety; that by piling ignominy upon opprobrium a people is decoyed; that espionage, serving as a caryatid to prostitution, amuses the crowd while insulting them; that the mob loves to see pass along on the four wheels of a fiacre this monstrous living heap, rag-tinsel, half ordure and half light, barking and singing; that people should clap their hands at this glory made up of every shame; that there should be no festival for the multitudes unless the police exhibit among them this sort of twenty-headed hydra of joy, certainly it is sad! But what is to be done? These tumbrils of beribboned and beflowered slime are insulted and forgiven by the public laughter. The laughter of all is the accomplice of the universal degradation. Certain unwholesome festivals disintegrate the people and make it a populace. And for populaces as well as for tyrants, buffoons are needed. The king has Roquelaure, the people have Harlequin. Paris is the great foolish town whenever she is not the great sublime city. The carnival is a part of her politics. Paris, we must admit, willingly supplies herself with comedy through infamy. She demands of her masters—when she has masters—but one thing: “Varnish me the mud!” Rome was of the same humor. She loved Nero. Nero was a Titanic lighterman.

Chance determined, as we have just said, that one of these shapeless bunches of masked women and men, drawn along in a huge calash, stopped on the left of the boulevard while the wedding cortège was stopping on the right. From one side of the boulevard to the other, the carriage in which the masks were looked into the carriage opposite, in which was the bride.

“Hullo!” said a mask, “a wedding.”

“A sham wedding,” replied another. “We are the genuine.”



And, too far off to be able to accost the wedding party, fearing moreover the call of the sergents-de-ville, the two masks looked elsewhere.

The whole carriage-load of masks had enough to do a moment afterward, the multitude began to hoot at it, which is the caress of the populace to the maskers, and the two masks which had just spoken were obliged to make front to the street with their comrades, and had none too many of all the weapons from the storehouse of the markets to answer the enormous jaw of the people. A frightful exchange of metaphors was carried on between the masks and the crowd.

Meanwhile, two other masks in the same carriage, a huge-nosed Spaniard with an oldish air and enormous black mustaches, and a puny jade, a very young girl, with a black velvet mask, had also noticed the wedding party, and, while their companions and the passers-by were lampooning one another, carried on a dialogue in a low tone.

Their aside was covered by the tumult and lost in it. The gusts of rain had soaked the carriage, which was thrown wide open; the February wind is not warm; even while answering the Spaniard, the girl, with her low-necked dress, shivered, laughed and coughed.

This was the dialogue:

"Say now."

"What, *daron*?" \*

"Do you see that old fellow?"

"What old fellow?"

"There in the first *roulotte*† of the wedding party by our side."

"Who has his arm hooked into a black cravat?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I am sure I know him."

"Ah!"

"I wish that somebody may *faucher* my *colabre*, and I have never in my *vioc* said *vousaille*, *tonorgue*, nor *mézig*, if I don't know that *pantinois*." ‡

"To-day Paris is Pantin."

---

\**Daron*, father.

†*Roulotte*, carriage.

‡I wish that somebody may cut my throat, and have never in my life said you, thee, nor me if I don't know that Parisian.

"Can you see the bride by stooping over?"

"No."

"And the groom?"

"There is no groom in that *roulotte*."

"Pshaw!"

"Unless it may be the other old fellow."

"Bend forward well and try to see the bride."

"I can't."

"It's all the same, that old fellow who has something the matter with his paw, I am sure I know him."

"And what good does it do you to know him?"

"Nobody knows. Sometimes!"

"I don't get much amusement out of old men, for my part."

"I know him."

"Know him to your heart's content."

"How the devil is he at the wedding?"

"We are at it, too, ourselves."

"Where does this wedding party come from?"

"How do I know?"

"Listen."

"What?"

"You must do something."

"What?"

"Get out of our *roulotte* and *filer*\* that wedding party."

"What for?"

"To know where it goes and what it is. Make haste to get out, run, my *fée*,† you are young."

"I can't leave the carriage."

"Why not?"

"I am rented."

"Ah, the deuce!"

"I owe my day to the prefecture."

"That is true."

"If I leave the carriage the first officer who sees me arrests me. You know very well."

"Yes, I know."

"To-day I am bought by *Pharos*.‡"

"It is all the same. That old fellow worries me."

"Old men worry you. You are not a young girl, however."

\**Filer*, follow.

†*Fée*, daughter.

‡*Pharos*, the government.

"He is in the first carriage."

"Well?"

"In the bride's *roulotte*."

"What then?"

"Then he is the father."

"What is that to me?"

"I tell you that he is the father."

"There isn't any other father."

"Listen."

"What?"

"For my part I can hardly go out unless I am masked. Here, I am hidden, nobody knows that I am here. But to-morrow there are no more masks. It is Ash Wednesday. I risk falling.\* I must get back to my hole. You are free."

"Not too much so."

"More than I, still."

"Well, what then?"

"You must try to find out where this wedding party have gone."

"Where it is going?"

"Yes."

"I know that."

"Where is it going, then?"

"To the Cadran Bleu."

"In the first place it is not in that direction."

"Well! to the Râpée."

"Or somewhere else."

"It is free. Weddings are free."

"That isn't all. I tell you that you must try to let me know what that wedding party is that this old fellow belongs to, and where that wedding party lives."

"Not often! that will be funny. It is convenient to find, a week afterward, a wedding party which passed by in Paris on Mardi Gras. A *tiquante*† in a haystack! Is it possible?"

"No matter, you must try. Do you understand, Azelma?"

The two files resumed their movement in opposite directions on the two sides of the boulevard, and the carriage of the masks lost sight of the bride's *roulotte*.

\**Falling*, being arrested.

†*Tiquante*, pin.



## II

## JEAN VALJEAN STILL HAS HIS ARM IN A SLING

TO realize his dream. To whom is that given? There must be elections for that in heaven, we are all unconscious candidates; the angels vote. Cosette and Marius had been elected.

Cosette, at the mairie and in the church, was brilliant and touching. Toussaint, aided by Nicolette, had dressed her.

Cosette wore her dress of Binche guipure over a skirt of white taffetas, a veil of English point, a necklace of fine pearls, a crown of orange flowers; all this was white and in this whiteness she was radiant. It was an exquisite candor, dilating and transfiguring itself into luminousness. One would have said she was a virgin in process of becoming a goddess.

Marius' beautiful hair was perfumed and lustrous; here and there might be discerned, under the thickness of the locks, pallid lines, which were the scars of the barricade.

The grandfather, superb, his head held high, uniting more than ever in his toilet and manners all the elegances of the time of Barras, conducted Cosette. He took the place of Jean Valjean, who, as his arm was in a sling, could not give his hand to the bride.

Jean Valjean, in black, followed and smiled.

"M. Fauchelevent," said the grandfather to him, "this is a happy day. I vote for the end of afflictions and sorrows. There must no longer be any sadness anywhere henceforth. By Jove! I decree joy! Evil has no right to be. That there should be unfortunate men—in truth, it is a shame to the blue sky. Evil does not come from man, who in reality is good. All human miseries have for their chief seat and central government hell, otherwise called the Tuileries of the devil. Good, here am I saving demagogical words now! As for me, I no longer have any political opinions: that all men may be rich, that is to say, happy, that is all I ask for."

When, at the completion of all the ceremonies, after

having pronounced before the mayor and the priest every possible yes, after having signed the registers at the municipality and at the sacristy, after having exchanged their rings, after having been on their knees elbow to elbow under the canopy of white moire in the smoke of the censer, hand in hand, admired and envied by all, Marius in black, she in white, preceded by the usher in colonel's epaulets striking the pavement with his halberd, between two hedges of marveling spectators, they arrived under the portal of the church where the folding-doors were both open, ready to get into the carriage again, and all was over, Cosette could not yet believe it. She looked at Marius, she looked at the throng, she looked at the sky, it seemed as if she were afraid of awaking. Her astonished and bewildered air rendered her unspeakably bewitching. To return they got into the same carriage, Marius by Cosette's side; M. Gillenormand and Jean Valjean sat opposite. Aunt Gillenormand had drawn back one degree, and was in the second carriage. "My children," said the grandfather, "here you are, M. l'Baron and Mme. l'Baroness, with 30,000 francs a year." And Cosette, leaning close up to Marius, caressed his ear with this angelic whisper: "It is true, then. My name is Marius. I am Madame You."

These two beings were resplendent. They were at the irrevocable and undiscoverable hour, at the dazzling point of intersection of all youth and of all joy. They realized Jean Prouvaire's rhymes; together they could not count forty years. It was marriage sublimated, these two children were two lilies. They did not see each other, they contemplated each other. Cosette beheld Marius in a glory, Marius beheld Cosette upon an altar. And upon that altar, and in that glory, the two apotheoses mingling, in the background, mysteriously, behind a cloud to Cosette, in flashing flame to Marius, there was the ideal, the real, the rendezvous of the kiss and the dream, the nuptial pillow.

Every torment which they had experienced was returned by them in intoxication. It seemed to them that the griefs, the sleeplessness, the tears, the anguish, the dismay, the despair, become caresses, and radiance, rendered still more enchanting the enchanting hour which was approaching, and that their sorrows were so many servants making the

toilet of their joy. To have suffered, how good it is! Their grief made a halo about their happiness. The long agony of their love terminated in an ascension.

There was in these two souls the same enchantment, shaded with anticipation in Marius and with modesty in Cosette. They said to each other in a whisper: "We will go and see our little garden in the Rue Plumet again." The folds of Cosette's dress were over Marius.

Such a day is an ineffable mixture of dream and of certainty. You possess and you suppose. You still have some time before you for imagination. It is an unspeakable emotion on that day to be at noon and to think of midnight. The delight of these two hearts overflowed upon the throng and gave joy to the passers-by.

People stopped in the Rue St. Antoine in front of St. Paul's to see through the carriage window the orange flowers trembling upon Cosette's head.

Then they returned to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire to their home. Marius, side by side with Cosette, ascended, triumphant and radiant, that staircase up which he had been carried dying. The poor gathered before the door, and, sharing their purses, they blessed them. There were flowers everywhere. The house was not less perfumed than the church, after incense roses. They thought they heard voices singing in the infinite, they had God in their hearts; destiny appeared to them like a ceiling of stars; they saw above their heads a gleam of sunrise. Suddenly the clock struck. Marius looked at Cosette's bewitching bare arm and the rosy things which he dimly perceived through the lace of her corsage, and Cosette, seeing Marius look, began to blush even to the tips of her ears.

A good number of the old friends of the Gillenormand family had been invited; they pressed eagerly about Cosette. They vied with each other in calling her Mme. l'Baroness.

The officer Théodule Gillenormand, now a captain, had come from Chartres, where he was now in garrison, to attend the wedding of his Cousin Pontmercy. Cosette did not recognize him.

He, for his part, accustomed to being thought handsome by the women, remembered Cosette no more than any other.



"I was right in not believing that lancer's story," said Grandfather Gillenormand to himself.

Cosette had never been more tender toward Jean Valjean. She was in unison with Grandfather Gillenormand; while he embodied joy in aphorisms and in maxims, she exhaled love and kindness like a perfume. Happiness wishes everybody happy.

She went back in speaking to Jean Valjean to the tones of voice of the time when she was a little girl. She caressed him with smiles.

A banquet had been prepared in the dining-room.

An illumination, a *giorna*, is the necessary attendant of a great joy. Dusk and obscurity are not accepted by the happy. They do not consent to be dark. Night, yes; darkness, no. If there is no sun one must be made.

The dining-room was a furnace of cheerful things. In the centre, above the white and glittering table, a Venetian lustre with flat drops, with all sorts of colored birds, blue, violet, red, green, perched in the midst of the candles; about the lustre girandoles, upon the wall reflectors with triple and quintuple branches, glasses, crystals, glassware, vessels, porcelains, Faënza ware, pottery, gold and silver ware, all sparkled and rejoiced. The spaces between the candelabra were filled with bouquets, so that wherever there was not a light there was a flower.

In the ante-chamber three violins and a flute played some of Haydn's quartets in softened strains.

Jean Valjean sat in a chair in the parlor behind the door, which shut back upon him in such a way as almost to hide him. A few moments before they took their seats at the table Cosette came as if from a sudden impulse and made him a low courtesy, spreading out her bridal dress with both hands and with a tenderly frolicsome look, she asked him: "Father, are you pleased?"

"Yes," said Jean Valjean, "I am pleased."

"Well, then, laugh."

Jean Valjean began to laugh.

A few minutes afterward Basque announced dinner.

The guests, preceded by M. Gillenormand giving his arm to Cosette, entered the dining-room and took their places according to the appointed order about the table.

Two large armchairs were placed on the right and on

the left of the bride, the first for M. Gillenormand, the second for Jean Valjean. M. Gillenormand took his seat. The other armchair remained empty.

All eyes sought "M. Fauchelevant." He was not there. M. Gillenormand called Basque.

"Do you know where M. Fauchelevant is?"

"Monsieur," answered Basque. "Exactly, M. Fauchelevant told me to say to monsieur that he was suffering a little from his sore hand, and could not dine with M. l'Baron and Mme. l'Baroness. That he begged they would excuse him, that he would come to-morrow morning. He has just gone away."

This empty armchair chilled for a moment the effusion of the nuptial repast. But, M. Fauchelevant absent, M. Gillenormand was there, and the grandfather was brilliant enough for two. He declared that M. Fauchelevant did well to go to bed early, if he was suffering, but that it was only a "scratch." This declaration was enough. Besides, what was one dark corner in such a deluge of joy? Cosette and Marius were in one of those selfish and blessed moments when we have no faculty save for the perception of happiness. And then, M. Gillenormand had an idea. "By Jove! this armchair is empty. Come here, Marius. Your aunt, although she has a right to you, will allow it. This armchair is for you. It is legal and it is proper. 'Fortunatus beside Fortunata.'" Applause from the whole table. Marius took Jean Valjean's place at Cosette's side; and things arranged themselves in such a way that Cosette, at first saddened by Jean Valjean's absence, was finally satisfied with it. From the moment that Marius was the substitute Cosette would not have regretted God. She put her soft little foot incased in white satin upon Marius' foot.

The armchair occupied, M. Fauchelevant was effaced; and nothing was missed. And five minutes later the whole table was laughing from one end to the other with all the spirit of forgetfulness.

At the dessert, M. Gillenormand, standing, a glass of champagne in his hand, filled half full so that the trembling of his ninety-two years should not spill it, gave the health of the married pair.

"You shall not escape two sermons," exclaimed he.

"This morning you had the curé's, to-night you shall have the grandfather's. Listen to me; I am going to give you a piece of advice: 'Adore one another.' I don't make a heap of flourishes. I go to the end, be happy. The only sages in creation are the turtle-doves. The philosophers say: 'Moderate your joys.' I say: 'Give them the rein.' Be enamored like devils. Be rabid. The philosophers dote. I would like to cram their philosophy back into their throats. Can there be too many perfumes, too many open rosebuds, too many nightingales singing, too many green leaves, too much aurora in life? can you love each other too much? can you please each other too much? Take care, Estelle, you are too pretty! Take care, Némorin, you are too handsome! The rare absurdity! Can you enchant each other too much, pet each other too much, charm each other too much? Can you be too much alive? can you be too happy? Moderate your joys. Ah, pshaw! Down with the philosophers! Wisdom is jubilation. Jubilate, jubilate. Are we happy because we are good; or are we good because we are happy? Is the Sancy called the Sancy because it belonged to Harley de Sancy, or because it weighs *cent-six* [106] carats? I know nothing about it; life is full of such problems; the important thing is to have the Sancy and happiness. Be happy without quibbling. Obey the sun blindly. What is the sun? It is love. Who says love says woman. Ah, ha! There is an omnipotence; it is woman. Ask this demagogue of a Marius if he be not the slave of this little tyrant of a Cosette, and with his full consent, the coward! Woman! There is no Robespierre who holds out, woman reigns. I am no longer a royalist except for that royalty. What is Adam? He is the realm of Eve. No '89 for Eve. There was the royal sceptre surmounted by a fleur-de-lis; there was the imperial sceptre surmounted by a globe; there was the sceptre of Charlemagne, which was of iron; there was the sceptre of Louis XIV, which was of gold; the Revolution twisted them between its thumb and finger like half-penny wisps of straw; they are finished, they are broken, they are the ground, there is no longer a sceptre; but get me up some revolutions now against this little embroidered handkerchief which smells of patchouli! I would like to see you at it. Try.



Why is it immovable? Because it is a rag. Ah! you are the nineteenth century! Well, what then? We were the eighteenth! and we were as stupid as you. Don't imagine that you have changed any great thing in the universe because your stoop-gallant is called the cholera morbus, and because your boree is called the cachucha. At heart you must always love women. I defy you to get away from that. These devilesses are our angels. Yes, love woman, the kiss, that is a circle which I defy you to get out of; and, as for myself, I would like very well to get back into it. Which of you has seen rising into the infinite, calming all beneath her, gazing upon the waves like a woman, the star Venus, the great coquette of the abyss, the Celimene of the ocean? The ocean is a rude Alceste. Well, he scolds in vain; Venus appears, he is obliged to smile. That brute beast submits. We are all so. Wrath, tempest, thunderbolts foam to the sky. A woman enters on the scene, a star rises; flat on your face! Marius was fighting six months ago; he is marrying to-day. Well done. Yes, Marius, yes, Cosette, you are right. Live boldly for one another, my-love one another, make us die with rage that we can not do as much, idolatrize each other. Take in your two beaks all the little straws of felicity on earth, and build yourselves a nest for life. By Jove! to love, to be loved, the admirable miracle when one is young! Don't imagine that you have invented it. I, too, I have had my dream, my vision, my sighs; I, too, have had a moonlight soul. Love is a child 6,000 years old. Love has a right to a long white beard. Methuselah is a *gamin* beside Cupid. For sixty centuries man and woman have got out of the scrape by loving. The devil, who is malicious, took to hating man; man, who is more malicious, took to loving woman. In this way he has done himself more good than the devil has done him harm. This trick was discovered at the time of the earthly paradise. My friends, the invention is old, but it is quite new. Profit by it. Be Daphnis and Chloe while you are waiting to be Philemon and Baucis. So act that, when you are with each other, there shall be nothing wanting, and that Cosette may be the sun to Marius, and that Marius may be the universe to Cosette. Cosette, let your fine weather be the smile of your husband; Marius, let your rain be

the tears of your wife. And may it never rain in your household. You have filched the good number in the lottery, a love-match; you have the highest prize, take good care of it, put it under lock and key, don't squander it, worship each other and snap your fingers at the rest. Believe what I tell you. It is good sense. Good sense can not lie. Be a religion to each other. Every one has his own way of worshiping God. Zounds! the best way to worship God is to love your wife. I love you! that is my catechism. Whoever loves is orthodox. Henry IV's oath put sanctity between gluttony and drunkenness. *Ventre-saint-gris!* I am not of the religion of that oath. Woman is forgotten in it. That astonishes me on the part of Henry IV's oath. My friends, long live woman! I am old, they say; it is astonishing how I feel myself growing young again. I would like to go and listen to the bagpipes in the woods. These children who are so fortunate as to be beautiful and happy, that fuddles me. I would get married myself if anybody wished. It is impossible to imagine that God has made us for anything but this: To idolize, to coo, to plume, to be pigeons, to be cocks, to bill with our loves from morning to night, to take pride in our little wives, to be vain, to be triumphant, to put on airs; that is the aim of life. That is, without offence to you, what we thought, we old fellows, in our times when we were the young folks. Ah, odswinkers! what charming women there were in those days, and pretty faces and lassies! There's where I made my ravages. Then love each other. If people did not love one another I really don't see what use there would be in having any spring; and, for my part, I should pray the good God to pack up all the pretty things which He shows us, and take them away from us and to put the flowers, the birds, and the pretty girls back into His box. My children, receive the benediction of the old good man."

The evening was lively, gay, delightful. The sovereign good humor of the grandfather gave the keynote to the whole festival, and everybody regulated himself by this almost centenarian cordiality. They danced a little, they laughed much; it was a good child-like wedding. They might have invited the good man Formerly. Indeed, he was there in the person of Grandfather Gillenormand.

There was tumult, then silence.

The bride and groom disappeared.

A little after midnight the Gillenormand house became a temple.

Here we stop. Upon the threshold of wedding nights stands an angel smiling, his finger on his lip.

The soul enters into contemplation before this sanctuary in which is held the celebration of love.

There must be gleams of light above those houses. The joy which they contain must escape in light through the stones of the walls and shine dimly into the darkness. It is impossible that this sacred festival of destiny should not send a celestial radiation to the infinite. Love is the sublime crucible in which is consummated the fusion of man and woman; the one being, the triple being, the final being, the human trinity springs from it. This birth of two souls into one must be an emotion for space. The lover is priest; the rapt maiden is affrighted. Something of this joy goes to God. Where there is really marriage that is where there is love, the ideal is mingled with it. A nuptial bed makes a halo in the darkness. Were it given to the eye of flesh to perceive the fearful and enchanting sights of the superior life, it is probable that we should see the forms of night, the winged strangers, the blue travelers of the invisible, bending, a throng of shadowy heads, over the luminous house, pleased, blessing; showing to one another the sweetly startled maiden bride, and wearing the reflection of the human felicity upon their divine countenances. If, at that supreme hour, the wedded pair, bewildered with pleasure, and believing themselves alone, were to listen, they would hear in their chamber a rustling of confused wings. Perfect happiness implies the solidarity of the angels. That little obscure alcove has for its ceiling the whole heavens. When two mouths, made sacred by love, draw near each other to create, it is impossible that above that ineffable kiss there should not be a thrill in the immense mystery of the stars.

These are the true felicities. No joy beyond these joys. Love is the only ecstasy, everything else weeps.

To love or to have loved, that is enough. Ask nothing further. There is no other pearl to be found in the dark folds of life. To love is a consummation.



## III

## THE INSEPARABLE

WHAT had become of Jean Valjean?

Immediately after having laughed, upon Cosette's playful injunction, nobody observing him, Jean Valjean had left his seat, got up, and, unperceived, had reached the ante-chamber. It was that same room which eight months before he had entered, black with mire, blood and powder, bringing the grandson home to the grandfather. The old woodwork was garlanded with leaves and flowers; the musicians were seated on the couch upon which they had placed Marius. Basque, in a black coat, short breeches, white stockings and white gloves, was arranging crowns of roses about each of the dishes which were to be served up. Jean Valjean had shown him his arm in a sling, charged him to explain his absence, and gone away.

The windows of the dining-room looked upon the street. Jean Valjean stood for some minutes motionless in the obscurity under those radiant windows. He listened. The confused sounds of the banquet reached him. He heard the loud and authoritative words of the grandfather, the violins, the clatter of the plates and glasses, the bursts of laughter, and through all that gay uproar he distinguished Cosette's sweet, joyous voice.

He left the Rue des Filles du Calvaire and returned to the Rue de l'Homme Armé.

To return he went by the Rue St. Louis, the Rue Culture Sainte Catherine, and the Blancs Manteaux; it was a little longer, but it was the way by which, for three months, to avoid the obstructions and the mud of the Rue Vielle du Temple, he had been accustomed to come every day from the Rue de l'Homme Armé to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire with Cosette.

This way over which Cosette had passed excluded him from every other road.

Jean Valjean returned home. He lighted his candle and went upstairs. The apartment was empty. Tous-saint herself was no longer there. Jean Valjean's step made more noise than usual in the rooms. All the closets

were open. He went into Cosette's room. There were no sheets on the bed. The pillow, without a pillow-case and without laces, was laid upon the coverlets folded at the foot of the mattress, of which the ticking was to be seen and on which nobody should sleep henceforth. All the little feminine objects to which Cosette clung had been carried away; there remained only the heavy furniture and the four walls. Toussaint's bed was also stripped. A single bed was made and seemed waiting for somebody; that was Jean Valjean's.

Jean Valjean looked at the walls, shut some closet doors, went and came from one room to the other.

Then he found himself again in his own room, and he put his candle on a table.

He had released his arm from the sling, and he helped himself with his right hand as if he did not suffer much from it.

He approached his bed, and his eyes fell; was it by chance? was it with intention? upon the inseparable, of which Cosette had been jealous, upon the little trunk which never left him. On the 4th of June, on arriving in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, he had placed it upon a candle-stand at the head of his bed. He went to this stand with a sort of vivacity, took a key from his pocket and opened the valise.

He took out slowly the garments in which, ten years before, Cosette had left Montfermeil; first the little dress, then the black scarf, then the great heavy child's shoes which Cosette could have almost put on still, so small a foot she had; then the bodice of very thick fustian, then the knit skirt, then the apron with pockets, then the woollen stockings. Those stockings, on which the shape of a little leg was still gracefully marked, were hardly longer than Jean Valjean's hand. These were all black. He had carried these garments for her to Montfermeil. As he took them out of the valise he laid them on the bed. He was thinking. He remembered. It was in winter, a very cold December, she shivered half-naked in rags, her poor little feet were all red in her wooden shoes. He, Jean Valjean, he had taken her away from those rags to clothe her in this mourning garb. The mother must have been pleased in her tomb to see her daughter wear mourning

for her, and especially to see that she was clad, and that she was warm. He thought of the forest of Montfermeil; they had crossed it together, Cosette and he; he thought of the weather, of the trees without leaves, of the forest without birds, of the sky without sun; it is all the same; it was charming. He arranged the little things upon the bed, the scarf next the skirt, the stockings beside the shoes, the bodice beside the dress; and he looked at them one after another. She was no higher than that; she had her great doll in her arms; she put her louis d'or in the pocket of this apron; she laughed; they walked, holding each other by the hand; she had nobody but him in the world.

Then his venerable white head fell upon the bed; his old stoical heart broke; his face was swallowed up, so to speak, in Cosette's garments; and anybody who had passed along the staircase at that moment would have heard fearful sobs.

#### IV

##### IMMORTALE JECUR

**T**HE formidable old struggle, several phases of which we have already seen, recommenced.

Jacob wrestled with the angel but one night. Alas! how many times have we seen Jean Valjean clinched, body to body, in the darkness, with his conscience, and wrestling desperately against it.

Unparalleled struggle! At certain moments the foot slips; at others, the ground gives way. How many times had that conscience, furious for the right, grasped and overwhelmed him! How many times had truth, inexorable, planted her knee upon his breast. How many times, thrown to the ground by the light, had he cried to it for mercy! How many times had that implacable light, kindled in him and over him by the bishop, irresistibly dazzled him when he desired to be blinded! How many times had he risen up in the combat, bound to the rock, supported by sophism, dragged in the dust, sometimes bearing down his conscience beneath him, sometimes borne down by it! How many times, after an equivocation, after a treacherous and specious reasoning of selfishness, had he heard his outraged conscience cry in his ear: "A trip! wretch!" How



many times had his refractory thought writhed convulsively under the evidence of duty! Resistance to God. Agonizing sweats. How many secret wounds which he, alone, felt bleed! How many chafings of his miserable existence! How many times had he risen up bleeding, bruised, lacerated, illuminated, despair in his heart, serenity in his soul, and, conquered, felt himself conqueror. And, after having racked, torn, and broken him, his conscience, standing above him, formidable, luminous, tranquil, said to him: "Now, go in peace!"

But, on coming out of so gloomy a struggle, what dreary peace, alas!

That night, however, Jean Valjean felt that he was giving his last battle.

A poignant question presented itself.

Predestinations are not all straight; they do not develop themselves in a rectilinear avenue before the predestinated; they are blind alleys, cœcums, obscure windings, embarrassing cross-roads offering several paths. Jean Valjean was halting at this moment at the most perilous of these cross-roads.

He had reached the last crossing of good and evil. He had that dark intersection before his eyes. This time again, as it had already happened to him in other sorrowful crises, two roads opened before him—the one tempting, the other terrible. Which should he take?

The one which terrified him was advised by the mysterious indicating finger which we all perceive whenever we fix our eyes upon the shadow.

Jean Valjean had, once again, the choice between the terrible haven and the smiling ambush.

It is true, then? the soul may be cured, but not the lot. Fearful thing! an incurable destiny!

The question which presented itself was this:

In what manner should Jean Valjean comport himself in regard to the happiness of Cosette and Marius? This happiness, it was he who had willed it, it was he who had made it; he had thrust it into his own heart, and at this hour, looking upon it, he might have the same satisfaction that an armorer would have who should recognize his own mark upon a blade, on withdrawing it, all reeking, from his breast.

Cosette had Marius—Marius possessed Cosette. They had everything, even riches. And it was his work.

But this happiness, now that it existed, now that it was here, what was he to do with it—he, Jean Valjean? Should he impose himself upon this happiness? Should he treat it as belonging to him? Unquestionably, Cosette was another's; but should he, Jean Valjean, retain all of Cosette that he could retain? Should he remain the kind of father, scarcely seen, but respected, which he had been hitherto? Should he introduce himself quietly into Cosette's house? Should he bring, without saying a word, his past to this future? Should he present himself there as having a right, and should he come and take his seat, veiled, at that luminous hearth? Should he take, smiling upon them, the hands of those innocent beings into his two tragical hands? Should he place upon the peaceful andirons of the Gillenormand parlor his feet, which dragged after them the infamous shadow of the law? Should he enter upon a participation of chances with Cosette and Marius? Should he thicken the obscurity upon his head and the cloud upon theirs? Should he put in his catastrophe as a companion for their two felicities? Should he continue to keep silence? In a word, should he be, by the side of these two happy beings, the ominous mute of destiny?

We must be accustomed to fatality and its encounter to dare to raise our eyes when certain questions appear to us in their horrible nakedness. Good or evil is behind this severe interrogation point. "What are you going to do?" demands the sphinx.

The familiarity with trial Jean Valjean had. He looked fixedly upon the sphinx.

He examined the pitiless problem under all its phases. Cosette, that charming existence, was the raft of this shipwreck. What was he to do? Cling on or let go his hold?

If he clung to it he escaped disaster, he rose again into the sunshine, he let the bitter water drip from his garments and his hair, he was saved, he lived.

If he loosed his hold?

Then, the abyss.

Thus bitterly he held counsel with his thoughts, or, to speak more truthfully, he struggled; he rushed, furious

within himself, sometimes against his will, sometimes against his convictions.

It was a good thing for Jean Valjean that he had been able to weep. It gave him light, perhaps. For all that the beginning was wild. A tempest, more furious than that which had formerly driven him toward Arras, broke loose within him. The past came back to him face to face with the present; he compared and he sobbed. The sluice of tears once opened, the despairing man writhed.

He felt that he was stopped.

Alas! in this unrelenting pugilism between our selfishness and our duty, when we thus recoil step by step before our immutable ideal, bewildered, enraged, exasperated at yielding, disputing the ground, hoping for possible flight, seeking some outlet, how abrupt and ominous is the resistance of the wall behind us!

To feel the sacred shadow which bars the way.

The inexorable invisible, what an obsession!

We are never done with conscience. Choose your course by it, Brutus; choose your course by it, Cato. It is bottomless, being God. We cast into this pit the labor of our whole life, we cast in our fortune, we cast in our riches, we cast in our success, we cast in our liberty or our country, we cast in our well-being, we cast in our repose, we cast in our happiness. More! more! more! Empty the vase! turn out the urn! We must at last cast in our heart.

There is somewhere in the midst of the old hells a vessel like that.

Is it not pardonable to refuse at last? Can the inexhaustible have a claim? Are not endless chains above human strength? Who then would blame Sisyphus and Jean Valjean for saying: "It is enough!"

The obedience of matter is limited by friction; is there no limit to the obedience of the soul? If perpetual motion is impossible, is perpetual devotion demandable?

The first step is nothing; it is the last which is difficult. What was the Champmathieu affair compared with Cosette's marriage and all that it involved? What is returning to the galleys compared to entering into nothingness?

Oh, first step of descent, how gloomy thou art! Oh, second step, how black thou art!

How should he not turn away his head this time?



Martyrdom is a sublimation, a corrosive sublimation. It is a torture of consecration. You consent to it the first hour; you sit upon the throne of red-hot iron, you put upon your brow the crown of red-hot iron, you receive the globe of red-hot iron, you take the sceptre of red-hot iron; but you have yet to put on the mantle of flame, and is there no moment when the wretched flesh revolts, and when you abdicate the torture?

At last Jean Valjean entered the calmness of despair.

He weighed, he thought, he considered the alternatives of the mysterious balance of light and shade.

To impose his galleys upon these two dazzling children, or to consummate by himself his irremediable engulfment. On the one side the sacrifice of Cosette, on the other of himself.

At what solution did he stop?

What determination did he take? What was, within himself, his final answer to the incorruptible demand of fatality? What door did he decide to open? Which side of his life did he resolve to close and to condemn? Between all these unfathomable precipices which surrounded him, what was his choice? What extremity did he accept? To which of these gulfs did he bow his head?

His giddy reverie lasted all night.

He remained there until dawn, in the same attitude, doubled over on the bed, prostrated under the enormity of fate, crushed perhaps, alas! his fists clinched, his arms extended at a right angle like one taken from the cross and thrown down with his face to the ground. He remained twelve hours, the twelve hours of a long winter night, chilled, without lifting his head, and without uttering a word. He was as motionless as a corpse, while his thought writhed upon the ground and flew away, now like the hydra, now like the eagle. To see him thus without motion, one would have said he was dead; suddenly he thrilled convulsively, and his mouth, fixed upon Cosette's garments, kissed them; then one saw that he was alive.

What one? since Jean Valjean was alone and there was nobody there?

That one who is in the darkness.

BOOK SEVENTH  
THE LAST DROP IN THE CHALICE

## I

## THE SEVENTH CIRCLE AND THE EIGHT HEAVEN

THE day after a wedding is solitary. The privacy of the happy is respected. And thus their slumber is a little belated. The tumult of visits and felicitations does not commence until later. On the morning of the 17th of February, it was a little after noon, when Basque, his napkin and duster under his arm, busy "doing his ante-chamber," heard a light rap at the door. There was no ring, which is considerate on such a day. Basque opened and saw M. Fauchelevent. He introduced him into the parlor, still cumbered and topsy-turvy, and which had the appearance of the battle-field of the evening's festivities.

"Faith, monsieur," observed Basque, "we are waking up late."

"Has your master risen?" inquired Jean Valjean.

"How is monsieur's arm?" answered Basque.

"Better. Has your master risen?"

"Which? The old or the new one?"

"M. Pontmercy."

"M. le Baron?" said Basque, drawing himself up.

One is baron to his domestics above all. Something of it is reflected upon them; they have what a philosopher would call the spattering of the title, and it flatters them. Marius, to speak of it in passing, a republican militant, and he had proved it, was now a baron in spite of himself. A slight revolution had taken place in the family in regard to this title. At present it was M. Gillenormand who clung to it and Marius who made light of it. But Col. Pontmercy had written: "My son will bear my title." Marius obeyed. And then Cosette, in whom the woman was beginning to dawn, was in raptures at being a baroness.

"M. le Baron?" repeated Basque, "I will go and see. I will tell him that M. Fauchelevent is here."

"No. Do not tell him it is I. Tell him that some-

body asks to speak with him in private, and do not give him any name."

"Ah!" said Basque.

"I wish to give him a surprise."

"Ah!" resumed Basque, giving himself his second ah! as an explanation of the first.

And he went out.

Jean Valjean remained alone.

The parlor, as we have just said, was all in disorder. It seemed that by lending the ear the vague rumor of the wedding might still have been heard. There were all sorts of flowers which had fallen from garlands and head-dresses upon the floor. The candles, burned to the socket, added stalactites of wax to the pendants of the lustres. Not a piece of furniture was in its place. In the corners, three or four armchairs, drawn up and forming a circle, had the appearance of continuing a conversation. Altogether it was joyous. There is still a certain grace in a dead festival. It has been happy. Upon those chairs in disarray, among those flowers which are withering under those extinguished lights, there have been thoughts of joy. The sun succeeded to the chandelier and entered cheerfully into the parlor.

A few minutes elapsed. Jean Valjean was motionless in the spot where Basque had left him. He was very pale. His eyes were hollow and so sunken in their sockets from want of sleep that they could hardly be seen. His black coat had the weary folds of a garment which had passed the night. The elbows were whitened with that down which is left upon cloth by the chafing of linen. Jean Valjean was looking at the window marked out by the sun upon the floor at his feet.

There was a noise at the door, he raised his eyes.

Marius entered, his head erect, his mouth smiling, an indescribable light upon his face, his forehead radiant, his eye triumphant. He also had not slept.

"It is you, father!" exclaimed he on perceiving Jean Valjean; "that idiot of a Basque with his mysterious air! But you come too early. It is only half an hour after noon yet. Cosette is asleep."

That word "father," said to M. Fauchelevent by Marius, signified: Supreme felicity. There had always been, as



we know, barrier, coldness, and constraint between them; ice to break or to melt. Marius had reached that degree of intoxication where the barrier was falling, the ice was dissolving, and M. Fauchelevent was to him, as to Cosette, a father.

He continued; words overflowed from him, which is characteristic of these divine paroxysms of joy:

"How glad I am to see you! If you knew how we missed you yesterday! Good-morning, father. How is your hand? Better, is it not?"

And, satisfied with the good answer which he made to himself, he went on:

"We have both of us talked much about you. Cosette loves you so much! You will not forget that your room is here. We will have no more of the Rue de l'Homme Armé. We will have no more of it at all. How could you go to live in a street like that, which is sickly, which is scowling, which is ugly, which has a barrier at one end, where you are cold and where you can not get in? You will come and install yourself here. And that to-day. Or you will have a bone to pick with Cosette. She intends to lead us all by the nose, I warn you. You have seen your room, it is close by ours, it looks upon the garden, the lock has been fixed, the bed is made, it is all ready, you have nothing to do but to come. Cosette has put a great old easy-chair of Utrecht velvet beside your bed, to which she said: 'Stretch out your arms for him.' Every spring, in the clump of acacias which is in front of your windows, there comes a nightingale, you will have her in two months. You will have her nest at your left and ours at your right. By night she will sing, and by day Cosette will talk. Your room is full in the south. Cosette will arrange your books there for you, your 'Voyage of Capt. Cook,' and the other, Vancouver's, all your things. There is, I believe, a little valise which you treasure; I have selected a place of honor for it. You have conquered my grandfather, you suit him. We will live together. Do you know whist? you will overjoy my grandfather if you know whist. You will take Cosette to walk on my court-days, you will give her your arm, you know, as at the Luxembourg formerly. We have absolutely decided to be very happy. And you are

part of our happiness, do you understand, father? Come, now, you breakfast with us to-day?"

"Monsieur," said Jean Valjean, "I have one thing to tell you. I am an old convict."

The limit of perceptible acute sounds may be passed quite as easily for the mind as for the ear. Those words: "I am an old convict," coming from M. Fauchelevent's mouth and entering Marius' ear, went beyond the possible. Marius did not hear. It seemed to him; that something had just been said to him; but he knew not what. He stood aghast.

He then perceived that the man who was talking to him was terrible. Excited as he was, he had not until this moment noticed that frightful pallor.

Jean Valjean untied the black cravat which sustained his right arm, took off the cloth wound about his hand, laid his thumb bare and showed it to Marius.

"There is nothing the matter with my hand," said he.

Marius looked at the thumb.

"There has never been anything the matter with it," continued Jean Valjean.

There was, in fact, no trace of a wound.

Jean Valjean pursued:

"It was best that I should be absent from your marriage. I absented myself as much as I could. I feigned this wound so as not to commit a forgery, not to introduce a nullity into the marriage acts, to be excused from signing."

Marius stammered out:

"What does this mean?"

"It means," answered Jean Valjean, "that I have been in the galleys."

"You drive me mad!" exclaimed Marius in dismay.

"M. Pontmercy," said Jean Valjean, "I was nineteen years in the galleys. For robbery. Then I was sentenced for life. For robbery. For a second offence. At this hour I am in breach of ban."

It was useless for Marius to recoil before the reality, to refuse the fact, to resist the evidence; he was compelled to yield. He began to comprehend, and as always happens in such a case, he comprehended beyond the truth. He felt the shiver of a horrible interior flash; an idea which

made him shudder crossed his mind. He caught a glimpse in the future of a hideous destiny for himself.

"Tell all! tell all!" cried he. "You are Cosette's father!"

And he took two steps backward with an expression of unspeakable horror.

Jean Valjean raised his head with such a majesty of attitude that he seemed to rise to the ceiling.

"It is necessary that you believe me in this, monsieur; although the oath of such as I be not received."

Here he made a pause; then, with a sort of sovereign and sepulchral authority, he added, articulating slowly and emphasizing his syllables:

"You will believe me, I, the father of Cosette! before God, no. M. l'Baron Pontmercy, I am a peasant of Faverolles. I earned my living by pruning trees. My name is not Fauchelevent, my name is Jean Valjean. I am nothing to Cosette. Compose yourself."

Marius faltered:

"Who proves it to me—"

"I. Since I say so."

Marius looked at this man. He was mournful, yet self-possessed. No lie could come out of such a calmness. That which is frozen is sincere. We feel the truth in that sepulchral coldness.

"I believe you," said Marius.

Jean Valjean inclined his head as if making oath, and continued:

"What am I to Cosette? a passer. Ten years ago I did not know that she existed. I love her, it is true. A child whom one has seen when little, being himself already old, he loves. When a man is old he feels like a grandfather toward all little children. You can, it seems to me, suppose that I have something which resembles a heart. She was an orphan. Without father or mother. She had need of me. That is why I began to love her. Children are so weak that anybody, even a man like me, may be their protector. I performed that duty with regard to Cosette. I do not think that one could truly call so little a thing a good deed; but if it is a good deed, well, set it down that I have done it. Record that mitigating circumstance. To-day Cosette leaves my life; our two roads separate.



Henceforth I can do nothing more for her. She is Mme. Pontmercy. Her protector is changed. And Cosette gains by the change. All is well. As for the 600,000 francs, you have not spoken of them to me, but I anticipate your thought; that is a trust. How did this trust come into my hands? What matters it? I make over the trust. Nothing more can be asked of me. I complete the restitution by telling my real name. This again concerns me. I desire myself, that you should know who I am."

And Jean Valjean looked Marius in the face.

All that Marius felt was tumultuous and incoherent. Certain blasts of destiny make such waves in our soul.

We have all had such moments of trouble, in which everything within us is dispersed; we say the first things that come to mind, which are not always precisely those that we should say. There are sudden revelations which we can not bear, and which intoxicate like a noxious wine. Marius was so stupefied at the new condition of affairs which opened before him that he spoke to this man almost as though he were angry with him for his avowal.

"But after all," exclaimed he, "why do you tell me all this? What compels you to do so? You could have kept the secret to yourself. You are neither denounced nor pursued nor hunted. You have some reason for making, from mere wantonness, such a revelation. Finish it. There is something else. In connection with what do you make this avowal? From what motive?"

"From what motive?" answered Jean Valjean, in a voice so low and so hollow that one would have said it was to himself he was speaking rather than to Marius. "From what motive, indeed, does this convict come and say: 'I am a convict?' Well, yes! the motive is strange. It is from honor. Yes, my misfortune is a cord which I have here in my heart which holds me fast. When one is old these cords are strong. The whole life wastes away about them, they hold fast. If I had been able to tear out this cord, to break it, to untie the knot, or to cut it, to go far away, I had been saved; I had only to depart; there are diligences in the Rue du Bouloy; you are happy, I go away. I have tried to break this cord, I have pulled upon it, it held firmly, it did not snap, I was tearing my heart out with it. Then I said, I can not live away from here. I must stay.

Well, yes; but you are right, I am a fool, why not just simply stay? You offer me a room in the house, Mme. Pontmercy loves me well, she says to that armchair: 'Stretch out your arms for him'; your grandfather asks nothing better than to have me, I suit him; we shall all live together, eat in common. I will give my arm to Cosette—to Mme. Pontmercy, pardon me, it is from habit—we will have but one roof, but one table, but one fire, the same chimney corner in winter, the same promenade in summer, that is joy, that is happiness, that, it is everything. We will live as one family, one family!"

At this word Jean Valjean grew wild. He folded his arms, gazed at the floor at his feet as if he wished to hollow out an abyss in it, and his voice suddenly became piercing.

"One family! no. I am of no family. I am not of yours. I am not of the family of men. In houses where people are at home I am an incumbrance. There are families, but they are not for me. I am the unfortunate; I am outside. Had I a father and a mother? I almost doubt it. The day that I married that child it was all over; I saw that she was happy and that she was with the man whom she loved and that there was a good old man here, a household of two angels, all joys in this house and that it was well, I said to myself: 'Enter thou not.' I could have lied, it is true, have deceived you all, have remained M. Fauchelevent. As long as it was for her I could lie; but now it would be for myself, I must not do it. It was enough to remain silent, it is true, and everything would continue. You ask me what forces me to speak? A strange thing; my conscience. To remain silent was, however, very easy. I have passed the night in trying to persuade myself to do so; you are confessing me, and what I come to tell you is so strange that you have a right to do so; well, yes, I have passed the night in giving myself reasons; I have given myself very good reasons; I have done what I could; it was of no use. But there are two things in which I did not succeed; neither in breaking the cord which holds me by the heart fixed, riveted and sealed here, nor in silencing some one who speaks low to me when I am alone. That is why I have come to confess all to you this morning. All, or almost all. It is useless to tell what

concerns only myself; I keep it for myself. The essential you know. So I have taken my mystery and brought it to you. And I have ripped open my secret under your eyes. It was not an easy resolution to form. All night I have struggled with myself. Ah! you think I have not said to myself that this is not the Champmathieu affair; that in concealing my name I do no harm to anybody; that the name of Fauchelevent was given to me by Fauchelevent himself in gratitude for a service rendered and I could very well keep it and that I should be happy in this room which you offer me; that I should interfere with nothing; that I should be in my little corner, and that, while you would have Cosette, I should have the idea of being in the same house with her. Each one would have had his due share of happiness. To continue to be M. Fauchelevent smoothed the way for everything. Yes, except for my soul. There was joy everywhere about me; the depths of my soul were still black. It is not enough to be happy; we must be satisfied with ourselves. Thus I should have remained M. Fauchelevent; thus I should have concealed my real face; thus, in presence of your cheerfulness, I should have borne an enigma; thus, in the midst of your broad day, I should have been darkness; thus, without openly crying beware, I should have introduced the galleys at your hearth; I should have sat down at your table with the thought that, if you knew who I was, you would drive me away; I should have let myself be served by domestics, who, if they had known, would have said: 'How horrible!' I should have touched you with my elbow, which you have a right to shrink from; I should have filched the grasp of your hand! There would have been in your house a division of respect between venerable white hairs and dishonored white hairs; at your most intimate hours, when all hearts would have thought themselves open to each other to the bottom, when we should have been all four together, your grandfather, you two and myself, there would have been a stranger there! I should have been side by side with you in your existence, having but one care—never to displace the covering of my terrible pit. Thus, I, a dead man, should have imposed myself upon you, who are alive. Her I should have condemned to myself forever. You, Cosette and I, we should have been three heads in the



green cap! Do you not shudder? I am only the most depressed of men; I should have been the most monstrous. And this crime I should have committed every day! And this lie I should have acted every day! And this face of night I should have worn every day! And of my disgrace, I should have given to you your part every day! every day! to you, my loved ones; you, my children; you, my innocents! To be quiet is nothing? To keep silence is simple? No, it is not simple. There is a silence which lies. And my lie, and my fraud, and my unworthiness, and my cowardice, and my treachery, and my crime, I should have drunk drop by drop; I should have spit it out, then drunk again; I should have finished at midnight and recommenced at noon, and my good-morning would have lied, and my good-night would have lied, and I should have slept upon it, and I should have eaten it with my bread, and I should have looked Cosette in the face, and I should have answered the smile of the angel with the smile of the damned, and I should have been a detestable impostor! What for? to be happy. To be happy; I! Have I a right to be happy? I am outside of life, monsieur."

Jean Valjean stopped. Marius listened. Such a chain of ideas and of pangs can not be interrupted. Jean Valjean lowered his voice anew; it was an ominous voice.

"You ask why I speak? I am neither informed against nor pursued nor hunted, say you. Yes, I am informed against! Yes; I am pursued! Yes; I am hunted! By whom? By myself. It is I, myself, who bars the way before myself and I drag myself and I urge myself and I check myself and I exert myself; and when one holds himself he is well held."

And seizing his own coat in his clinched hand and drawing it toward Marius:

"Look at this hand, now," continued he. "Don't you think that it holds this collar in such a way as not to let go? Well; conscience has quite another grasp. If we wish to be happy, monsieur, we must never comprehend duty; for, as soon as we comprehend it, it is implacable. One would say that it punishes you for comprehending it; but no, it rewards you for it; for it puts you into a hell where you feel God at your side. Your heart is not so soon lacerated when you are at peace with yourself."

And with a bitter emphasis, he added:

"M. Pontmercy, this is not common-sense, but I am an honest man. It is by degrading myself in your eyes that I elevate myself in my own. This has already happened to me once, but it was less grievous then; it was nothing. Yes, an honest man. I should not be one if you had, by my fault, continued to esteem me; now that you despise me, I am one. I have this fatality upon me that, being forever unable to have any but stolen consideration; that consideration humiliates me and depresses me inwardly; and in order that I may respect myself, I must be despised. Then I hold myself erect. I am a galley slave who obeys his conscience. I know well that it is improbable. But what would you have me do? It is so. I have assumed engagements toward myself; I keep them. There are accidents which bind us; there are chances which drag us into duties. You see, M. Pontmercy, some things have happened to me in my life."

Jean Valjean paused again, swallowing his saliva with effort, as if his words had a bitter after-taste, and resumed:

"When one has such a horror over him he has no right to make others share it without their knowledge; he has no right to communicate his pestilence to them; he has no right to make them slip down his precipice without warning of it; he has no right to let his red cap be drawn upon them; he has no right craftily to incumber the happiness of others with his own misery. To approach those who are well, and to touch them in the shadow with his invisible ulcer, that is horrible. Fauchelevent lent me his name in vain. I had no right to make use of it; he could give it to me, I could not take it. A name is a Me. You see, monsieur, I have thought a little; I have read a little, although I am a peasant; and you see that I express myself tolerably. I form my own idea of things. I have given myself an education of my own. Well, yes, to purloin a name, and to put yourself under it, is dishonest. The letters of the alphabet may be stolen as well as a purse or a watch. To be a false signature in flesh and blood; to be a living false key: to enter the houses of honest people by picking their locks: never to look again; always to squint; to be infamous within myself. No! no! no! no! It

is better to suffer, to bleed, to weep, to tear the skin from the flesh with the nails; to pass the nights in writhing in anguish; to gnaw away body and soul. That is why I come to tell you all this. In mere wantonness, as you say."

He breathed with difficulty and forced out these final words:

"To live, once I stole a loaf of bread; to-day, to live, I will not steal a name."

"To live!" interrupted Marius. "You have no need of that name to live!"

"Ah! I understand," answered Jean Valjean, raising and lowering his head several times in succession.

There was a pause. Both were silent, each sunk in an abyss of thought. Marius had seated himself beside a table, and was resting the corner of his mouth on one of his bent fingers. Jean Valjean was walking back and forth. He stopped before a glass and stood motionless. Then, as if answering some inward reasoning, he said, looking at that glass in which he did not see himself:

"While, at present, I am relieved!"

He resumed his walk and went to the other end of the parlor. Just as he began to turn he perceived that Marius was noticing his walk. He said to him with an inexpressible accent:

"I drag one leg a little. You understand why, now."

Then he turned quite round toward Marius:

"And now, monsieur, picture this to yourself: I have said nothing, I have remained M. Fauchelevent, I have taken my place in your house, I am one of you, I am in my room, I come to breakfast in the morning in slippers, at night we all three go to the theatre, I accompany Mme. Pontmercy to the Tuileries and to the Place Royale, we are together, you suppose me your equal; some fine day I am there, you are there, we are chatting, we are laughing, suddenly you hear a voice shout this name: 'Jean Valjean!' and you see that appalling hand, the police, spring out of the shadow and abruptly tear off my mask!"

He ceased again; Marius had risen with a shudder. Jean Valjean resumed:

"What say you?"

Marius' silence answered.



Jean Valjean continued:

"You see very well that I am right in not keeping quiet. Go on, be happy, be in heaven, be an angel of an angel, be in the sunshine, and be contented with it, and do not trouble yourself about the way which a poor condemned man takes to open his heart and do his duty; you have a wretched man before you, monsieur."

Marius crossed the parlor slowly, and, when he was near Jean Valjean, extended him his hand.

But Marius had to take that hand which did not offer itself, Jean Valjean was passive, and it seemed to Marius that he was grasping a hand of marble.

"My grandfather has friends," said Marius. I will procure your pardon."

"It is useless," answered Jean Valjean. "They think me dead, that is enough. The dead are not subjected to surveillance. They are supposed to moulder tranquilly. Death is the same thing as pardon."

And, disengaging his hand, which Marius held, he added, with a sort of inexorable dignity: "Besides, to do my duty, that is the friend to which I have recourse; and I need pardon of but one, that is my conscience."

Just then, at the other end of the parlor, the door was softly opened a little way, and Cosette's head made its appearance. They saw only her sweet face, her hair was in charming disorder, her eyelids were still swollen with sleep. She made the movement of a bird passing its head out of its nest, looked first at her husband, then at Jean Valjean, and called to them with a laugh, you would have thought you saw a smile at the bottom of a rose:

"I'll wager that you're talking politics. How stupid that is, instead of being with me!"

Jean Valjean shuddered.

"Cosette," faltered Marius, and he stopped. One would have said that they were two culprits.

Cosette, radiant, continued to look at them both. The frolic of paradise was in her eyes.

"I catch you in the very act," said Cosette. "I just heard my father Fauchelevent say, through the door: 'Conscience—do his duty.' It is politics, that is. I will not have it. You ought not to talk politics the very next day. It is not right."

"You are mistaken, Cosette," answered Marius. "We were talking business. We are talking of the best investment for your 600,000 francs—"

"It is not all that," interrupted Cosette. "I am coming. Do you want me here?"

And, passing resolutely through the door, she came into the parlor. She was dressed in a full white morning gown, with a thousand folds and with wide sleeves which, starting from the neck, fell to her feet. There are in the golden skies of old Gothic pictures such charming robes for angels to wear.

She viewed herself from head to foot in a large glass, then exclaimed with an explosion of ineffable ecstasy:

"Once there was a king and a queen. Oh, how happy I am!"

So saying, she made a reverence to Marius and to Jean Valjean.

"There," said she, "I am going to install myself by you in an armchair; we breakfast in half an hour, you shall say all you wish to; I know very well that men must talk, I shall be very good."

Marius took her arm, and said to her, lovingly:

"We are talking business."

"By the way," answered Cosette, "I have opened my window, a flock of *pierrots* [*sparrows* or *masks*] have just arrived in the garden. Birds, not masks. It is Ash Wednesday to-day; but not for the birds."

"I tell you we are talking business; go, my darling Cosette, leave us a moment. We are talking figures. It will tire you."

"You have put on a charming cravat this morning, Marius. You are very coquettish, monseigneur. It will not tire me."

"I assure you that it will tire you."

"No. Because it is you. I shall not understand you, but I will listen to you. When we hear voices that we love, we need not understand the words they say. To be here together is all that I want. I shall stay with you; pshaw!"

"You are my darling Cosette! Impossible."

"Impossible!"

"Yes."

"Very well," replied Cosette. "I would have told you the news. I would have told you that grandfather is still asleep, that your aunt is at Mass, that the chimney in my father Fauchelevent's room smokes, that Nicolette has sent for the sweep, that Toussaint and Nicolette have had a quarrel already, that Nicolette makes fun of Toussaint's stuttering. Well, you shall know nothing. Ah! it is impossible! I, too, in my turn, you shall see, monsieur, I will say: it is impossible. Then who will be caught? I pray you, my darling Marius, let me stay here with you two."

"I swear to you that we must be alone."

"Well, am I anybody?"

Jean Valjean did not utter a word. Cosette turned toward him.

"In the first place, father, I want you to come and kiss me. What are you doing here, saying nothing, instead of taking my part? who gave me such a father as that? You see plainly that I am very unfortunate in my domestic affairs. My husband beats me. Come, kiss me this instant."

Jean Valjean approached.

Cosette turned toward Marius.

"You, sir, I make faces at you."

Then she offered her forehead to Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean took a step toward her.

Cosette drew back.

"Father, you are pale. Does your arm hurt you?"

"It is well," said Jean Valjean.

"Have you slept badly?"

"No."

"Are you sad?"

"No."

"Kiss me. If you are well, if you sleep well, if you are happy, I will not scold you."

And again she offered him her forehead.

Jean Valjean kissed that forehead, upon which there was a celestial reflection.

"Smile."

Jean Valjean obeyed. It was the smile of a spectre.

"Now defend me against my husband."

"Cosette!" said Marius.



"Get angry, father. Tell him that I must stay. You can surely talk before me. So you think me very silly? It is very astonishing then what you are saying! business, putting money in a bank, that is a great affair. Men play the mysterious for nothing. I want to stay. I am very pretty this morning. Look at me, Marius."

And with an adorable shrug of the shoulders and an inexpressively exquisite pout, she looked at Marius. It was like a flash between these two beings. That somebody was there mattered little.

"I love you!" said Marius.

"I adore you!" said Cosette.

And they fell irresistibly into each other's arms.

"Now," resumed Cosette, readjusting a fold of her gown with a little triumphant pout, "I shall stay."

"What, no," answered Marius, in a tone of entreaty, "we have something to finish."

"No still?"

Marius assumed a grave tone of voice:

"I assure you, Cosette, that it is impossible."

"Ah, you put on your man's voice, monsieur. Very well, I'll go. You, father, you have not sustained me. Monsieur my husband, monsieur my papa, you are tyrants. I am going to tell grandfather of you. If you think that I shall come back and talk nonsense to you, you are mistaken. I am proud. I wait for you now; you will see that it is you who will get tired without me. I am going away; very well."

And she went out.

Two seconds later the door opened again, her fresh rosy face passed once more between the two folding-doors, and she cried to them:

"I am very angry."

The door closed again and the darkness returned.

It was like a stray sunbeam, which, without suspecting it, should have suddenly traversed the night.

Marius made sure that the door was well closed.

"Poor Cosette!" murmured he, "when she knows—"

At these words Jean Valjean trembled in every limb. He fixed upon Marius a bewildered eye.

"Cosette! Oh, yes, it is true, you will tell this to Cosette. That is right. Stop, I had not thought of that.

People have the strength for some things, but not for others. Monsieur, I beseech you, I entreat you, monsieur, give me your most sacred word, do not tell her. Is it not enough that you know it yourself? I could have told it of myself without being forced to it; I would have told it to the universe, to all the world; that would be nothing to me. But she doesn't know what it is; it would appall her. A convict, why! you would have to explain it to her, to tell her: It is a man who has been in the galleys. She saw the chain pass by one day. Oh, my God!"

He sank into an armchair and hid his face in both hands. He could not be heard, but by the shaking of his shoulders it could be seen that he was weeping. Silent tears, terrible tears.

There is a stifling in the sob. A sort of convulsion seized him, he bent over upon the back of the armchair as if to breathe, letting his arms hang down, and allowing Marius to see his face bathed in tears; and Marius heard him murmur so low that his voice seemed to come from a bottomless depth: "Oh! would that I could die!"

"Be calm," said Marius, "I will keep your secret for myself alone."

And, less softened perhaps than he should have been, but obliged for an hour past to familiarize himself with a fearful surprise, seeing by degrees a convict superimposed before his eyes upon M. Fauchelevent, possessed little by little of this dismal reality, and led by the natural tendency of the position to determine the distance which had just been put between this man and himself, Marius added:

"It is impossible that I should not say a word to you of the trust which you have so faithfully and so honestly restored. That is an act of probity. It is just that a recompense should be given you. Fix the sum yourself, it shall be counted out to you. Do not be afraid to fix it very high."

"I thank you, monsieur," answered Jean Valjean gently.

He remained thoughtful a moment, passing the end of his forefinger over his thumb-nail mechanically, then he raised his voice:

"It is all nearly finished. There is one thing left—"  
"What?"

Jean Valjean had, as it were, a supreme hesitation, and voiceless, almost breathless, he faltered out rather than said:

"Now that you know, do you think, monsieur, you, who are the master, that I ought not to see Cosette again?"

"I think that would be best," answered Marius coldly.

"I shall not see her again," murmured Jean Valjean.

And he walked toward the door.

He placed his hand upon the knob, the latch yielded, the door started, Jean Valjean opened it wide enough to enable him to pass out, stopped a second motionless, then shut the door and turned toward Marius.

He was no longer pale, he was livid. There were no longer tears in his eyes, but a sort of tragical flame. His voice had again become strangely calm.

"But, monsieur," said he, "if you are willing, I will come and see her. I assure you that I desire it very much. If I had not clung to seeing Cosette, I should not have made the avowal which I have made, I should have gone away; but wishing to stay in the place where Cosette is and to continue to see her I was compelled in honor to tell you all. You follow my reasoning, do you not? That is a thing which explains itself. You see, for nine years past I have had her near me. We lived first in that ruin on the boulevard, then in the convent, then near the Luxembourg. It was there that you saw her for the first time. You remember her blue plush hat. We were afterward in the quartier of the Invalides where there was a grating and a garden—Rue Plumet. I lived in a little back yard where I heard her piano. That was my life. We never left each other. That lasted nine years and some months. I was like her father and she was my child. I don't know whether you understand me, M. Pontmercy, but from the present time, to see her no more, to speak to her no more, to have nothing more, that would be hard. If you do not think it wrong, I will come from time to time to see Cosette; I would not come often; I would not stay long. You might say I should be received in the little low room on the ground floor. I would willingly come in by the back door, which is for the servants, but that would excite wonder, perhaps. It is better, I suppose, that I should enter by the usual



door. Monsieur, indeed, I would really like to see Cosette a little still; as rarely as you please. Put yourself in my place; it is all that I have. And, then, we must take care. If I should not come at all, it would have a bad effect; it would be thought singular. For instance, what I can do is to come in the evening, at nightfall."

"You will come every evening," said Marius, "and Cosette will expect you."

"You are kind, monsieur," said Jean Valjean.

Marius bowed to Jean Valjean, happiness conducted despair to the door, and these two men separated.

## II

### THE OBSCURITIES WHICH A REVELATION MAY CONTAIN

**M**ARIUS was completely unhinged. The kind of repulsion which he had always felt for the man with whom he saw Cosette was now explained. There was something strangely enigmatic in this person, of which his instinct had warned him. This enigma was the most hideous of disgraces, the galleys. This M. Fauchelevent was the convict Jean Valjean.

To suddenly find such a secret in the midst of one's happiness is like the discovery of a scorpion in a dove's nest.

Was the happiness of Marius and Cosette condemned henceforth to this fellowship? Was that a foregone conclusion? Did the acceptance of this man form a part of the marriage which had been consummated? Was there nothing more to be done?

Had Marius espoused the convict also?

It is of no avail to be crowned with light and with joy; it is of no avail to be reveling in the royal purple hour of life, happy love; such shocks would compel even the archangel in his ecstasy, even the demigod in his glory, to shudder.

As always happens in changes of view of this kind, Marius questioned himself whether he had not some fault to find with himself? Had he been wanting in perception? Had he been wanting in prudence? Had he been involuntarily stupefied? A little, perhaps. Had he entered without enough precaution, in clearing up its surroundings,

upon this love adventure which had ended in his marriage with Cosette? He determined—it is thus, by a succession of determinations by ourselves in regard to ourselves, that life improves us little by little—the chimerical and visionary side of his nature, a sort of interior cloud peculiar to many organizations, and which, in paroxysms of passion and grief, as the temperature of the soul changes, pervades the entire man to such an extent as to make him nothing more than a consciousness steeped in a fog. We have more than once indicated this characteristic element of Marius' individuality. He recollected that, in the infatuation of his love, in the Rue Plumet, during those six or seven ecstatic weeks, he had not even spoken to Cosette of that drama of the Gorbeau den, in which the victim had taken the very strange course of silence during the struggle, and of escape after it. How had he managed not to speak of it to Cosette? Yet it was so near and so frightful? How had he managed not even to name the Thenardiers to her, and, particularly, the day that he met Eponine? He had great difficulty now in explaining to himself his former silence. He did account for it, however. He recalled his stupor, his intoxication for Cosette, love absorbing everything, that uplifting of one by the other into the ideal, and perhaps, also, as the imperceptible quantity of reason mingled with this violent and charming state of the soul, a vague and dull instinct to hide and to abolish in his memory that terrible affair with which he dreaded contact, in which he wished to play no part, which he shunned, and in regard to which he could be neither narrator nor witness without being accuser. Besides, those few weeks had been but a flash; they had had time for nothing, except to love. Finally, everything being weighed, turned over and examined; if he had told the story of the Gorbeau ambuscade to Cosette; if he had named the Thenardiers to her, what would have been the consequences, if he had even discovered that Jean Valjean was a convict, would that have changed him, Marius? Would that have changed her, Cosette? Would he have shrunk back? Would he have adored her less? Would he the less have married her? No. Would it have changed anything in what had taken place? No. Nothing, then, to regret, nothing to reproach himself with. All was well.

There is a God for these drunkards who are called lovers. Blind, Marius had followed the route which he would have chosen had he seen clearly. Love had bandaged his eyes, to lead him where? To Paradise.

But this paradise was henceforth complicated with an infernal accompaniment.

The former repulsion of Marius toward this man, toward this Fauchelevent become Jean Valjean, was now mingled with horror.

In this horror we must say there was some pity, and also a certain astonishment.

This robber, this twice-convicted robber, had restored a trust. And what a trust? 600,000 francs. He was alone in the secret of the trust. He might have kept all, he had given up all.

Moreover, he had revealed his condition of his own accord. Nothing obliged him to do so. If it were known who he was, it was through himself. There was more in that avowal than the acceptance of humiliation, there was the acceptance of peril. To a condemned man, a mask is not a mask, but a shelter. He had renounced that shelter. A false name is security; he had thrown away this false name. He could, he, a galley slave, have hidden himself forever in an honorable family; he had resisted this temptation. And from what motive? from conscientious scruples. He had explained it himself with the irresistible accent of reality. In short, whatever this Jean Valjean might be, he had incontestably an awakened conscience. There was in him some mysterious regeneration begun; and, according to all appearance, for a long time already the scruple had been master of the man. Such paroxysms of justice and goodness do not belong to vulgar natures. An awakening of conscience is greatness of soul.

Jean Valjean was sincere. This sincerity visible, palpable, unquestionable, evident even by the grief which it caused him, rendered investigation useless and gave authority to all this man said. Here, for Marius, a strange inversion of situations. What came from M. Fauchelevent? distrust. What flowed from Jean Valjean? confidence.

In the mysterious account which Marius thoughtfully drew up concerning this Jean Valjean he verified the



credit, he verified the debit, he attempted to arrive at a balance. But it was all, as it were, in a storm. Marius, endeavoring to get a clear idea of this man, and pursuing, so to speak, Jean Valjean in the depths of his thought, lost him and found him again in a fatal mist.

The trust honestly surrendered, the probity of the avowal, that was good. It was like a break in the cloud, but the cloud again became black.

Confused as Marius' recollections were, some shadow of them returned to him.

What was the exact nature of that affair in the Jondrette garret? Why, on the arrival of the police, did this man, instead of making his complaint, make his escape? Here Marius found an answer. Because this man was a fugitive from justice in breach of ban.

Another question. Why had this man come into the barricade? For now Marius saw that reminiscence again distinctly, reappearing in these emotions like sympathetic ink before the fire. This man was in the barricade. He did not fight there. What did he come there for? Before this question a spectre arose and made response—Javert. Marius recalled perfectly to mind at this hour the fatal sight of Jean Valjean dragging Javert bound outside the barricade, and he again heard the frightful pistol-shot behind the corner of the little Rue Mondétour. There was, probably, hatred between this spy and this galley slave. The one cramped the other. Jean Valjean had gone to the barricade to avenge himself. He had arrived late. He knew probably that Javert was a prisoner there. The Corsican vendetta has penetrated into certain lower depths and is their law; it is so natural that it does not astonish souls half turned back toward the good; and these hearts are so constituted that a criminal in the path of repentance may be scrupulous in regard to robbery and not be so in regard to vengeance. Jean Valjean had killed Javert. At least that seemed evident.

Finally, a last question, but to this no answer. This question Marius felt like a sting. How did it happen that Jean Valjean's existence had touched Cosette's so long? What was this gloomy game of Providence which had placed this child in contact with this man? Are coupling chains, then, forged on high also, and does it please God to

pair the angel with the demon? Can, then, a crime and an innocence be room-mates in the mysterious galleys of misery? In this strait of the condemned, which is called human destiny, can two foreheads pass close to one another, the one child-like, the other terrible; the one all bathed in the divine whiteness of the dawn, the other forever pallid with the glare of an eternal lightning? Who could have determined this inexplicable fellowship? In what manner, through what prodigy, could community of life have been established between this celestial child and this old wretch? Who had been able to bind the lamb to the wolf, and a thing still more incomprehensible, attach the wolf to the lamb? For the wolf loved the lamb, for the savage being adored the frail being, for, during nine years, the angel had had the monster for a support. Cosette's childhood and youth, her coming to the day, her maidenly growth toward life and light, had been protected by this monstrous devotion. Here the questions exfoliated, so to speak, into innumerable enigmas, abyss opened at the bottom of abysm, and Marius could no longer bend over Jean Valjean without dizziness. What then was this man precipice?

The old Genesiac symbols are eternal; in human society, such as it is and will be, until the day when a greater light shall change it, there are always two men, one superior, the other subterranean. He who follows good is Abel; he who follows evil is Cain. What was this remorseful Cain? What was this bandit religiously absorbed in the adoration of a virgin, watching over her, bringing her up; guarding her, dignifying her and enveloping her, himself impure, with purity? What was this cloaca which had venerated this innocence to such an extent as to leave it immaculate? What was this Jean Valjean watching over the education of Cosette? What was this figure of darkness, whose only care was to preserve from all shadow and from all cloud the rising of a star?

In this was the secret of Jean Valjean; in this was also the secret of God.

Before this double secret Marius recoiled. The one in some sort reassured him in regard to the other. God was as visible in this as Jean Valjean. God has His instruments. He uses what tool he pleases. He is not re-

sponsible to man. Do we know the ways of God? Jean Valjean had labored upon Cosette. He had, to some extent, formed that soul. That was incontestable. Well, what then? The workman was horrible; but the work admirable. God performs His miracles as seems good to Himself. He had constructed this enchanting Cosette and He had employed Jean Valjean on the work. It had pleased Him to choose this strange co-worker. What reckoning have we to ask of Him? Is it the first time that the dunghill has aided spring to make the rose?

Marius made these answers to himself and declared that they were good. On all the points which we have just indicated he had not dared to press Jean Valjean, without avowing to himself that he dared not. He adored Cosette, he possessed Cosette. Cosette was resplendently pure. That was enough for him. What explanation did he need? Cosette was a light. Does light need to be explained? He had all; what could he desire? All, is not that enough? The personal affairs of Jean Valjean did not concern him. In bending over the fatal shade of this man he clung to this solemn declaration of the miserable being: "I am nothing to Cosette. Ten years ago I did not know of her existence."

Jean Valjean was a passer. He had said so himself. Well, he was passing away. Whatever he might be, his part was finished. Henceforth Marius was to perform the functions of Providence for Cosette. Cosette had come forth to find in the azure, her mate, her lover, her husband, her celestial male. In taking flight Cosette, winged and transfigured, left behind her on the ground, empty and hideous, her chrysalis, Jean Valjean.

In whatever circle of ideas Marius turned, he always came back from it to a certain horror of Jean Valjean. A sacred horror, perhaps, for he felt a *quid divinum* in this man. But, whatever he did and whatever mitigation he sought, he was always obliged to fall back upon this: he was a convict; that is the creature who, on the social ladder, has no place, being below the lowest round. After the lowest of men comes the convict. The convict is no longer, so to speak, the fellow of the living. The law has deprived him of all the humanity which it can take from a man. Marius, upon penal questions, although a



democrat, still adhered to the inexorable system, and he had, in regard to those whom the law smites, all the ideas of the law. He had not yet, let us say, adopted all the ideas of progress. He had not yet come to distinguish between what is written by man and what is written by God, between law and right. He had not examined and weighed the right which man assumes to dispose of the irrevocable and the irreparable. He had not revolted from the word vengeance. He thought it natural that certain infractions of the written law should be followed by eternal penalties, and he accepted social damnation as growing out of civilization. He was still at that point, infallibly to advance in time, his nature being good, and in reality entirely composed of latent progress.

Through the medium of these ideas Jean Valjean appeared to him deformed and repulsive. He was the outcast. He was the convict. This word was for him like a sound of the last trumpet; and, after having considered Jean Valjean long, his final action was to turn away his head. *Vade retro.*

Marius, we must remember, and even insist upon it, though he had questioned Jean Valjean to such an extent that Jean Valjean had said to him, "You are confessing me," had not, however, put to him two or three decisive questions. Not that they had not presented themselves to his mind, but he was afraid of them. The Jondrette garret? The barricade? Javert? Who knows where the revelations would have stopped? Jean Valjean did not seem the man to shrink, and who knows whether Marius, after having urged him on, would not have desired to restrain him? In certain supreme conjunctures has it not happened to all of us, after having put a question, to stop our ears that we might not hear the response? We have this cowardice, especially when we love. It is not prudent to question untoward situations to the last degree, especially when the indissoluble portion of our own life is fatally interwoven with them. From Jean Valjean's despairing explanations some appalling light might have sprung, and who knows but that hideous brilliancy might have been thrown even upon Cosette? Who knows but a sort of infernal glare would have remained upon the brow of this angel? The spatterings of a flash are still light-

ning. Fatality has such solidarities, whereby innocence itself is impressed with crime by the gloomy law of coloring reflections. The purest faces may preserve forever the reverberation of a horrible surrounding. Wrongly or rightly, Marius had been afraid. He knew too much already. He sought rather to blind than to enlighten himself. In desperation he carried off Cosette in his arms, closing his eyes upon Jean Valjean.

This man was of the night, of the living and terrible night. How should he dare to probe it to the bottom? It is appalling to question the shadow. Who knows what answer it will make? The dawn might be blackened by it forever.

In this frame of mind it was a bitter perplexity to Marius to think that this man should have henceforth any contact whatever with Cosette. These fearful questions, before which he had shrunk, and from which an implacable and definite decision might have sprung, he now reproached himself almost for not having put. He thought himself too good, too mild—let us say the word—too weak. This weakness had led him to an imprudent concession. He had allowed himself to be moved. He had done wrong. He should have merely and simply cast off Jean Valjean. Jean Valjean was the Jonah, he should have done it, and relieved his house of this man. He was vexed with himself; he was vexed with the abruptness of that whirl of emotion which had deafened, blinded, and drawn him on. He was displeased with himself.

What should be done now? Jean Valjean's visits were very repugnant to him. Of what use was this man in his house? What should he do? Here he shook off his thoughts; he was unwilling to probe, he was unwilling to go deeper, he was unwilling to fathom himself. He had promised, he had allowed himself to be led into a promise; Jean Valjean had his promise; even to a convict, especially to a convict, a man should keep his word. Still, his first duty was toward Cosette. In short, a repulsion, which predominated over all else, possessed him.

Marius turned all this assemblage of ideas over in his mind confusedly, passing from one to another, and excited by all. Hence a deep commotion. It was not easy

for him to hide this commotion from Cosette, but love is a talent, and Marius succeeded.

Besides, he put, without apparent object, some questions to Cosette, who, as candid as a dove is white, suspected nothing; he talked with her of her childhood and her youth, and he convinced himself more and more that all a man can be that is good, paternal, and venerable this convict had been to Cosette. All that Marius had dimly seen and conjectured was real. This darkly mysterious nettle had loved and protected this lily.

## BOOK EIGHTH — THE TWILIGHT WANE

### I

#### THE BASEMENT-ROOM

THE next day, at nightfall, Jean Valjean knocked at the M. Gillenormand *porte-cochère*. Basque received him. Basque happened to be in the courtyard very conveniently, and as if he had had orders. It sometimes happens that one says to a servant: "You will be on the watch for M. So-and-so, when he comes."

Basque, without waiting for Jean Valjean to come up to him, addressed him as follows:

"M. l'Baron told me to ask monsieur whether he desires to go upstairs or to remain below?"

"To remain below," answered Jean Valjean.

Basque, who was, moreover, absolutely respectful, opened the door of the basement-room and said: "I will inform madame."

The room which Jean Valjean entered was an arched and damp basement, used as a cellar when necessary, looking upon the street, paved with red tiles and dimly lighted by a window with an iron grating.

The room was not of those which are harassed by the brush, the duster, and the broom. In it the dust was tranquil. There the persecution of the spiders had not been organized. A fine web, broadly spread out, very black, adorned with dead flies, ornamented one of the window-panes. The room, small and low, was furnished with a pile of empty bottles heaped up in one corner. The



wall had been washed with a wash of yellow ochre, which was scaling off in large flakes. At the end was a wooden mantel painted black, with a narrow shelf. A fire was kindled, which indicated that somebody had anticipated Jean Valjean's answer: "To remain below."

Two armchairs were placed at the corners of the fireplace. Between the chairs was spread, in guise of a carpet, an old bedside rug, showing more warp than wool.

The room was lighted by the fire in the fireplace and the twilight from the window.

Jean Valjean was fatigued. For some days he had neither eaten nor slept. He let himself fall into one of the armchairs.

Basque returned, set a lighted candle upon the mantel and retired. Jean Valjean, his head bent down and his chin upon his breast, noticed neither Basque nor the candle.

Suddenly he started up. Cosette was behind him.

He had not seen her come in, but he had felt that she was coming.

He turned. He gazed at her. She was adorably beautiful. But what he looked upon with that deep look was not her beauty, but her soul.

"Ah, well!" exclaimed Cosette, "father, I knew that you were singular, but I should never have thought this. What an idea! Marius tells me that it is you who wished me to receive you here."

"Yes, it is I."

"I expected the answer. Well, I warn you that I am going to make a scene. Let us begin at the beginning. Father, kiss me."

And she offered her cheek.

Jean Valjean remained motionless.

"You do not stir. I see it. You act guilty. But it is all the same, I forgive you. Jesus Christ said: 'Offer the other cheek.' Here it is."

And she offered the other cheek.

Jean Valjean did not move. It seemed as if his feet were nailed to the floor.

"This is getting serious," said Cosette. "What have I done to you? I declare I am confounded. You owe me amends. You will dine with us."

"I have dined."

"That is not true. I will have M. Gillenormand scold you. Grandfathers are made to scold fathers. Come. Go up to the parlor with me. Immediately."

"Impossible."

Cosette here lost ground a little. She ceased to order and passed to questions.

"But why not? And you choose the ugliest room in the house to see me in. It is horrible here."

"You know, madame, I am peculiar, I have my whims."

Cosette clapped her little hands together.

"Madame! Still again! What does this mean?"

Jean Valjean fixed upon her that distressing smile to which he sometimes had recourse:

"You have wished to be madame. You are so."

"Not to you, father."

"Don't call me father any more."

"What?"

"Call me M. Jean. Jean, if you will."

"You are no longer father? I am no longer Cosette? M. Jean? What does this mean? But these are revolutions, these are! what, then, has happened? Look me in the face now. And you will not live with us? And you will not have my room? What have I done to you? What have I done to you? Is there anything the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Well, then?"

"All is as usual."

"Why do you change your name?"

"You have certainly changed yours."

He smiled again with that same smile and added:

"Since you are Mme. Pontmercy I can surely be M. Jean."

"I don't understand anything about it. It is all nonsense; I shall ask my husband's permission for you to be M. Jean. I hope that he will not consent to it. You make me a great deal of trouble. You may have whims, but you must not grieve your darling Cosette. It is wrong. You have no right to be naughty; you are too good."

He made no answer.

She seized both his hands hastily, and with an irresisti-

ble impulse, raising them toward her face, she pressed them against her neck under her chin, which is a deep token of affection.

"Oh," said she to him, "be good!"

And she continued:

"This is what I call being good: Being nice, coming to stay here, there are birds here as well as in the Rue Plumet, living with us, leaving that hole in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, not giving us riddles to guess, being like other people, dining with us, breakfasting with us, being my father."

He disengaged his hands.

"You have no more need of a father, you have a husband."

Cosette could not contain herself.

"I no more need of a father! To things like that which have no more common-sense one really doesn't know what to say."

"If Toussaint were here," replied Jean Valjean, like one who is in search of authorities and who catches at every straw, "she would be the first to acknowledge that it is true, that I had always had my peculiar ways. There is nothing new in this. I have always liked my dark corner."

"But it is cold here. We can't see clearly. It is horrid, too, to want to be M. Jean. I don't want you to talk so to me."

"Just now on my way here," answered Jean Valjean, "I saw a piece of furniture in the Rue St. Louis. At a cabinetmaker's. If I were a pretty woman I should make myself a present of that piece of furniture. A very fine toilet-table in the present style. What you call rosewood, I think. It is inlaid. A pretty large glass. There are drawers in it. It is handsome."

"Oh, the ugly bear!" replied Cosette.

And with a bewitching sauciness, pressing her teeth together and separating her lips, she blew upon Jean Valjean. It was a Grace copying a kitten.

"I am furious," she said. "Since yesterday you all make me rage. Everybody spites me. I don't understand. You don't defend me against Marius. Marius doesn't uphold me against you. I am all alone. I ar-



range a room handsomely. If I could have put the good God into it I would have done it. You leave me my room upon my hands. My tenant bankrupts me. I order Nicolette to have a nice little dinner. Nobody wants your dinner, madame. And my Father Fauchelevent wishes me to call him M. Jean and to receive him in a hideous, old, ugly, mouldy cellar, where the walls have a beard and where there are empty bottles for vases and spiders' webs for curtains. You are singular, I admit, that is your way, but a truce is granted to people who get married. You should not have gone back to being singular immediately. So you are going to be well satisfied with your horrid Rue de l'Homme Armé. I was very forlorn there myself. What have you against me? You give me a great deal of trouble. Fie!"

And growing suddenly serious she looked fixedly at Jean Valjean and added:

"So you don't like it that I am happy?"

Artlessness, unconsciously, sometimes penetrates very deep. This question, simple to Cosette, was severe to Jean Valjean. Cosette wished to scratch; she tore.

Jean Valjean grew pale. For a moment he did not answer, then, with an indescribable accent, and talking to himself, he murmured: "Her happiness was the aim of my life. Now, God may beckon me away. Cosette, you are happy; my time is full."

"Ah, you have called me Cosette!" exclaimed she.

And she sprang upon his neck.

Jean Valjean, in desperation, clasped her to his breast wildly. It seemed to him almost as if he were taking her back.

"Thank you, father!" said Cosette to him.

The transport was becoming poignant to Jean Valjean. He gently put away Cosette's arms and took his hat.

"Well?" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean answered:

"I will leave you, madame; they are waiting for you."

And, from the door, he added:

"I called you Cosette. Tell your husband that that shall not happen again. Pardon me."

Jean Valjean went out, leaving Cosette astounded at that enigmatic farewell.

## II

## OTHER STEPS BACKWARD

THE following day, at the same hour, Jean Valjean came.

Cosette put no questions to him, was no longer astonished, no longer exclaimed that she was cold, no longer talked of the parlor; she avoided saying either father or M. Jean. She let him speak as he would. She allowed herself to be called madame. Only she betrayed a certain diminution of joy. She would have been sad if sadness had been possible to her.

It is probable that she had had one of those conversations with Marius in which the beloved man says what he pleases, explains nothing, and satisfies the beloved woman. The curiosity of lovers does not go very far beyond their love.

The basement-room had made its toilet a little.

Basque had suppressed the bottles and Nicolette the spiders.

Every succeeding morrow brought Jean Valjean at the same hour. He came every day, not having the strength to take Marius' words otherwise than to the letter. Marius made his arrangements so as to be absent at the hours when Jean Valjean came. The house became accustomed to M. Fauchelevent's new mode of life. Toussaint said: "Monsieur always was just so." The grandfather issued this decree: "He is an original," and all was said. Besides, at ninety, no further tie is possible; all is juxtaposition; a newcomer is an annoyance. There is no more room; all the habits are formed. M. Fauchelevent, M. Tranchelevent, Grandfather Gillenormand asked nothing better than to be relieved of "that gentleman." He added: "Nothing is more common than these originals. They do all sorts of odd things. No motive. The Marquis de Canaples was worse. He bought a palace to live in the barn. They are fantastic appearances, which people put on."

Nobody caught a glimpse of the nether gloom. Who

could have guessed such a thing, moreover? There are such marshes in India; the water seems strange, inexplicable, quivering when there is no wind; agitated where it should be calm. You see upon the surface this causeless boiling; you do not perceive the Hydra crawling at the bottom.

Many men have thus a secret monster, a disease which they feed, a dragon which gnaws them, a despair which inhabits their night. Such a man resembles other people, goes, comes. Nobody knows that he has within him a fearful parasitic pain, with a thousand teeth, which lives in the miserable man, who is dying of it. Nobody knows that this man is a gulf. It is stagnant, but deep. From time to time a troubling, of which we understand nothing, shows itself on its surface. A mysterious wrinkle comes along, then vanishes, then reappears; a bubble of air rises and bursts. It is a little thing—it is terrible. It is the breathing of the unknown monster.

Certain strange habits, coming at the time when others are gone, shrinking away while others make a display, wearing on all occasions what might be called the wall-colored mantle, seeking the solitary path, preferring the deserted street, not mingling in conversations, avoiding gatherings and festivals, seeming at one's ease and living poorly, having, though rich, one's key in his pocket and his candle at the porter's, coming in by the side door, going up the back stairs; all these insignificant peculiarities, wrinkles, air bubbles, fugitive folds on the surface, often come from a formidable deep.

Several weeks passed thus. A new life gradually took possession of Cosette; the relations which marriage creates, the visits, the care of the house, the pleasures, those grand affairs. Cosette's pleasures were not costly; they consisted in a single one—being with Marius. Going out with him, staying at home with him, this was the great occupation of her life. It was a joy to them, forever new, to go out arm in arm in the face of the sun, in the open street, without hiding, in sight of everybody, all alone with each other. Cosette had one vexation, Toussaint could not agree with Nicolette, the wedding of two old maids being impossible, and went away. The grandfather was in good health; Marius argued a few cases now and then; Aunt



Gillenormand peacefully led by the side of the new household that lateral life which was enough for her. Jean Valjean came every day.

The disappearance of familiarity, the madame, the M. Jean, all this made him different to Cosette. The care which he had taken to detach her from him succeeded with her. She became more and more cheerful and less and less affectionate. However, she still loved him very much and he felt it. One day she suddenly said to him: "You were my father, you are no longer my father; you were my uncle, you are no longer my uncle; you were M. Fauchelevent, you are Jean. Who are you, then? I don't like all that. If I did not know you were so good I should be afraid of you."

He still lived in the Rue de l'Homme Armé, unable to resolve to move further from the quartier in which Cosette dwelt.

At first he stayed with Cosette only a few minutes, then went away.

Little by little he got into the habit of making his visits longer. One would have said that he took advantage of the example of the days, which were growing longer; he came earlier and went away later.

One day Cosette inadvertently said to him: "Father." A flash of joy illuminated Jean Valjean's gloomy old face. He replied to her: "Say Jean." "Ah, true!" she answered, with a burst of laughter, "M. Jean." "That is right," said he, and he turned away that she might not see him wipe his eyes.

### III

#### THEY REMEMBER THE GARDEN IN THE RUE PLUMET

**T**HAT was the last time. From that last gleam onward there was complete extinction. No more familiarity, no more good-day with a kiss, never again that word so intensely sweet, father! he was upon his own demand and through his own complicity driven in succession from every happiness; and he had this misery, that after having lost Cosette wholly in one day, he had been obliged afterward to lose her again little by little.

The eye at last becomes accustomed to the light of a cellar. In short, to have a vision of Cosette every day sufficed him. His whole life was concentrated in that hour. He sat by her side, he looked at her in silence, or rather he talked to her of the years long gone, of her childhood, of the convent, of her friends of those days.

One afternoon—it was one of the early days of April, already warm, still fresh, the season of the great cheerfulness of the sunshine, the gardens which lay about Marius' and Cosette's windows felt the emotion of awakening, the hawthorn was beginning to peep, a jeweled array of gilliflowers displayed themselves upon the old walls, the rosy wolf-mouths gaped in the cracks of the stones, there was a charming beginning of daisies and buttercups in the grass, the white butterflies of the year made their first appearance, the wind, that minstrel of the eternal wedding, essayed in the trees the first notes of that grand auroral symphony which the old poets called *renouveau*—Marius said to Cosette: "We have said that we would go to see our garden in the Rue Plumet again. Let us go. We must not be ungrateful." And they flew away like two swallows toward the spring. This garden in the Rue Plumet had the effect of the dawn upon them. They had behind them in life already something which was like the springtime of their love. The house in the Rue Plumet being taken on a lease, still belonged to Cosette. They went to this garden and this house. In it they found themselves again; they forgot themselves. At night at the usual hour Jean Valjean came to the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. "Madame has gone out with monsieur and has not returned yet," said Basque to him. He sat down in silence and waited an hour. Cosette did not return. He bowed his head and went away.

Cosette was so intoxicated with her walk to "the garden" and so happy over having "lived a whole day in her past" that she did not speak of anything else the next day. It did not occur to her that she had not seen Jean Valjean.

"How did you go there?" Jean Valjean asked her.

"We walked."

"And how did you return?"

"In a fiacre."

For some time Jean Valjean had noticed the frugal life which the young couple led. He was annoyed at it. Marius' economy was severe, and the word to Jean Valjean had its absolute sense. He ventured a question:

"Why have you no carriage of your own? A pretty brougham would cost you only 500 francs a month. You are rich."

"I don't know," answered Cosette.

"So with Toussaint," continued Jean Valjean. "She has gone away. You have not replaced her. Why not?"

"Nicolette is enough."

"But you must have a waiting-maid."

"Have not I Marius?"

"You ought to have a house of your own, servants of your own, a carriage, a box at the theatre. There is nothing too good for you. Why not have the advantages of being rich? Riches add to happiness."

Cosette made no answer.

Jean Valjean's visits did not grow shorter. Far from it. When the heart is slipping we do not stop on the descent.

When Jean Valjean desired to prolong his visit and to make the hours pass unnoticed he eulogized Marius; he thought him beautiful, noble, courageous, intellectual, eloquent, good. Cosette surpassed him. Jean Valjean began again. They were never silent. Marius, this word was inexhaustible; there were volumes in these six letters. In this way Jean Valjean succeeded in staying a long time. To see Cosette, to forget at her side, it was so sweet to him! It was the stanching of his wound. It happened several times that Basque came down twice to say: "M. Gille-normand sends me to remind Mme. l'Baroness that dinner is served."

On those days Jean Valjean returned home very thoughtful.

Was there, then, some truth in that comparison of the chrysalis which had presented itself to Marius' mind? Was Jean Valjean indeed a chrysalis who was obstinate and who came to make visits to his butterfly?

One day he stayed longer than usual. The next day he noticed that there was no fire in the fireplace. "What!" thought he. "No fire." And he made the explanation



to himself: "It is a matter of course. We are in April. The cold weather is over."

"Goodness! how cold it is here!" exclaimed Cosette, as she came in.

"Why, no," said Jean Valjean.

"So it is you who told Basque not to make a fire?"

"Yes. We are close upon May."

"But we have fire until the month of June. In this cellar, it is needed the year round."

"I thought that the fire was unnecessary."

"That is just one of your ideas!" replied Cosette.

The next day there was a fire. But the two armchairs were placed at the other end of the room, near the door.

"What does that mean?" thought Jean Valjean.

He went for the armchairs and put them back in their usual place near the chimney.

This fire being enkindled again encouraged him, however. He continued the conversation still longer than usual. As he was getting up to go away Cosette said to him:

"My husband said a funny thing to me yesterday."

"What was it?"

"He said: 'Cosette, we have an income of 30,000 francs. Twenty-seven that you have, 3,000 that my grandfather allows me.' I answered: 'That makes 30,000 francs.' 'Would you have the courage to live on 3,000 francs?' I answered: 'Yes, on nothing, provided it be with you.' And then I asked: 'Why do you say this?' He answered: 'To know.'"

Jean Valjean did not say a word. Cosette probably expected some explanation from him; he listened to her in a mournful silence. He went back to the Rue de l'Homme Armé; he was so deeply absorbed that he mistook the door, and, instead of entering his own house, he entered the next one. Not until he had gone up almost to the second story did he perceive his mistake and go down again.

His mind was racked with conjectures. It was evident that Marius had doubts in regard to the origin of these 600,000 francs, that he feared some impure source, who knows? that he had, perhaps, discovered that this money came from him, Jean Valjean, that he hesitated before this suspicious fortune, and disliked to take it as his own,

preferring to remain poor, himself and Cosette, than to be rich with a doubtful wealth.

Besides, vaguely, Jean Valjean began to feel that the door was shown him.

The next day he received, on entering the basement-room, something like a shock. The armchairs had disappeared. There was not even a chair of any kind.

"Ah, now," exclaimed Cosette, as she came in, "no chairs! Where are the armchairs, then?"

"They are gone," answered Jean Valjean.

"That is a pretty business!"

Jean Valjean stammered:

"I told Basque to take them away."

"And what for?"

"I shall stay only a few minutes to-day."

"Staying a little while is no reason for standing while you do stay."

"I believe that Basque needed some armchairs for the parlor."

"What for?"

"You doubtless have company this evening."

"We have nobody."

Jean Valjean could not say a word more.

Cosette shrugged her shoulders.

"To have the chairs carried away! The other day you had the fire put out. How singular you are!"

"Good-by," murmured Jean Valjean.

He did not say "Good-by, Cosette." But he had not the strength to say "Good-by, madame."

He went away overwhelmed.

This time he had understood.

The next day he did not come. Cosette did not notice it until night.

"Why," said she, "M. Jean has not come to-day."

She felt something like a slight oppression of the heart, but she hardly perceived it, being immediately diverted by a kiss from Marius.

The next day he did not come.

Cosette paid no attention to it; passed the evening and slept as usual, and thought of it only on awaking. She was so happy! She sent Nicolette very quickly to M. Jean's to know if he were sick, and why he had not come

the day before. Nicolette brought back M. Jean's answer. He was not sick. He was busy. He would come very soon. As soon as he could. However, he was going to take a little journey. Madame must remember that he was in the habit of making journeys from time to time. Let there be no anxiety. Let them not be troubled about him.

Nicolette, on entering M. Jean's house, had repeated to him the very words of her mistress: That madame sent to know "why M. Jean had not come the day before." "It is two days that I have not been there," said Jean Valjean mildly.

But the remark escaped the notice of Nicolette, who reported nothing of it to Cosette.

#### IV

##### ATTRACTION AND EXTINCTION

**D**URING the last months of the spring and the first months of the summer of 1833 the scattered wayfarers in the Marais, the storekeepers, the idlers upon the doorsteps, noticed an old man neatly dressed in black, every day, about the same hour, at nightfall, come out of the Rue de l'Homme Armé, in the direction of the Rue Sainte Croix de la Bretonnerie, pass by the Blancs Manteaux to the Rue Culture Sainte Catherine, and, reaching the Rue de l'Echarpe, turn to the left and enter the Rue St. Louis.

There he walked, with slow steps, his head bent forward, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, his eyes immovably fixed upon one point, always the same, which seemed studded with stars to him, and which was nothing more nor less than the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire. As he approached the corner of that street his face lighted up; a kind of joy illuminated his eye like an interior halo, he had a fascinated and softened expression, his lips moved vaguely, as if he were speaking to some one whom he did not see, he smiled faintly, and he advanced as slowly as he could. You would have said that even while wishing to reach some destination he dreaded the moment when he should be near it. When there were but a few houses left between him and that street which appeared



to attract him, his pace became so slow that at times you might have supposed he had ceased to move. The vacillation of his head and the fixedness of his eye reminded you of the needle seeking the pole. However long he succeeded in deferring it, he must arrive at last; he reached the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; then he stopped, he trembled, he put his head with a kind of gloomy timidity beyond the corner of the last house, and he looked into that street, and there was in that tragical look something which resembled the bewilderment of the impossible and the reflection of a forbidden paradise. Then a tear, which had gradually gathered in the corner of his eye, grown large enough to fall, glided over his cheek, and sometimes stopped at his mouth. The old man tasted its bitterness. He remained thus a few minutes, as if he had been stone; then he returned by the same route and at the same pace, and in proportion as he receded that look was extinguished.

Little by little this old man ceased to go as far as the corner of the Rue des Filles du Calvaire; he stopped half-way down the Rue St. Louis; sometimes a little further, sometimes a little nearer. One day he stopped at the corner of the Rue Culture Sainte Catherine, and looked at the Rue des Filles du Calvaire from the distance. Then he silently moved his head from right to left as if he were refusing himself something, and retraced his steps.

Very soon he no longer came even as far as the Rue St. Louis. He reached the Rue Pavée, shook his head, and went back; then he no longer went beyond the Rue des Trois Pavillons; then he no longer passed the Blancs Manteaux. You would have said a pendulum which has not been wound up, and the oscillations of which are growing shorter ere they stop.

Every day he came out of his house at the same hour, he commenced the same walk, but he did not finish it, and, perhaps unconsciously, he continually shortened it. His whole countenance expressed this single idea: What is the use? The eye was dull; no more radiance. The tear also was gone; it no longer gathered at the corner of the lids; that thoughtful eye was dry. The old man's head was still bent forward; his chin quivered at times;

the wrinkles of his thin neck were painful to behold. Sometimes, when the weather was bad, he carried an umbrella under his arm, which he never opened. The good women of the quartier said: "He is a natural." The children followed him, laughing.

## BOOK NINTH—SUPREME SHADOW, SUPREME DAWN

### I

#### PITY FOR THE UNHAPPY, BUT INDULGENCE FOR THE HAPPY

**I**T is a terrible thing to be happy! How pleased we are with it! How all-sufficient we think it! How, being in the possession of the false aim of life, happiness, we forget the true aim, duty!

We must say, however, that it would be unjust to blame Marius.

Marius, as we have explained, before his marriage, had put no questions to M. Fauchelevent, and, since, he had feared to put any to Jean Valjean. He had regretted the promise into which he had allowed himself to be led. He had reiterated to himself many times that he had done wrong in making that concession to despair. He did nothing more than gradually to banish Jean Valjean from his house, and to obliterate him as much as possible from Cosette's mind. He had in some sort constantly placed himself between Cosette and Jean Valjean, sure that in that way she would not notice him, and would never think of him. It was more than obliteration, it was eclipse.

Marius did what he deemed necessary and just. He supposed he had, for discarding Jean Valjean without harshness, but without weakness, serious reasons, which we have already seen, and still others, which we shall see further on. Having chanced to meet, in a cause in which he was engaged, an old clerk of the house Laffitte, he had obtained, without seeking it, some mysterious information which he could not, in truth, probe to the bottom,

from respect for the secret which he had promised to keep, and from care of Jean Valjean's perilous situation. He believed that at that very time he had a solemn duty to perform, the restitution of the 600,000 francs to somebody whom he was seeking as cautiously as possible. In the meantime he abstained from using that money.

As for Cosette, she was in none of these secrets; but it would be hard to condemn her also.

There was an all-powerful magnetism flowing from Marius to her which compelled her to do instinctively and almost mechanically what Marius wished. She felt, in regard to "M. Jean," a will from Marius; she conformed to it. Her husband had had nothing to say to her; she experienced the vague but clear pressure of his unspoken wishes and obeyed blindly. Her obedience in this consisted in not remembering what Marius forgot. She had to make no effort for that. Without knowing why herself, and without affording any grounds for censure, her soul had so thoroughly become her husband's soul, that whatever was covered with shadow in Marius' thoughts was obscured in hers.

We must not go too far, however, in what concerns Jean Valjean; this forgetfulness and this obliteration were only superficial. She was rather thoughtless than forgetful. At heart she really loved him whom she had so long called father. But she loved her husband still more. It was that which had somewhat swayed the balance of this heart, inclined in a single direction.

It sometimes happened that Cosette spoke of Jean Valjean and wondered. Then Marius calmed her: "He is absent, I think. Didn't he say that he was going away on a journey?"

"That is true," thought Cosette. "He was in the habit of disappearing in this way. But not for so long." Two or three times she sent Nicolette to inquire in the Rue de l'Homme Armé if M. Jean had returned from his journey. Jean Valjean had the answer returned that he had not.

Cosette did not inquire further, having but one need on earth, Marius.

We must also say that, on their part, Marius and Co-



sette had been absent. They had been to Vernon. Marius had taken Cosette to his father's grave.

Marius had little by little withdrawn Cosette from Jean Valjean. Cosette was passive.

Moreover, what is called much too harshly, in certain cases, the ingratitude of children, is not always as blameworthy a thing as is supposed. It is the ingratitude of nature. Nature, as we have said elsewhere, "looks forward." Nature divides living beings into the coming and the going. The going are turned toward the shadow, the coming toward the light. Hence a separation, which, on the part of the old, is a fatality, and, on the part of the young, involuntary. This separation, at first insensible, gradually increases, like every separation of branches. The limbs, without parting from the trunk, recede from it. It is not their fault. Youth goes where joy is, to festivals, to brilliant lights, to loves. Old age goes to its end. They do not lose sight of each other, but the ties are loosened. The affection of the young is chilled by life; that of the old by the grave. We must not blame these poor children.

## II

### THE LAST FLICKERINGS OF THE EXHAUSTED LAMP

ONE day Jean Valjean went downstairs, took three steps into the street, sat down upon a stone block, upon that same block where Gavroche, on the night of the 5th of June, had found him musing; he remained there a few minutes, then went upstairs again. This was the last oscillation of the pendulum. The next day he did not leave his room. The day after he did not leave his bed.

His portress, who prepared his frugal meal—some cabbage or a few potatoes with a little pork—looked into the brown earthen plate and exclaimed:

"Why, you didn't eat anything yesterday, poor, dear man!"

"Yes, I did," answered Jean Valjean.

"The plate is all full."

"Look at the water pitcher. That is empty."

"That shows that you have drunk; it don't show that you have eaten."

"Well," said Jean Valjean, "suppose I have only been hungry for water?"

"That is called thirst, and, when people don't eat at the same time, it is called fever."

"I will eat to-morrow."

"Or at Christmas. Why not eat to-day? Do people say: I will eat to-morrow? To leave me my whole plateful without touching it! My cold-slaw, which was so good!"

Jean Valjean took the old woman's hand:

"I promise to eat it," said he to her in his benevolent voice.

"I am not satisfied with you," answered the portress.

Jean Valjean scarcely ever saw any other human being than this good woman. There are streets in Paris in which nobody walks and houses into which nobody comes. He was in one of those streets and in one of those houses.

While he still went out, he had bought of a brazier for a few sous a little copper crucifix, which he had hung upon a nail before his bed. The cross is always good to look upon.

A week elapsed and Jean Valjean had not taken a step in his room. He was still in bed. The portress said to her husband: "The good man upstairs does not get up any more, he does not eat any more, he will not last long. He has trouble, he has. Nobody can get it out of my head that his daughter has made a bad match."

The porter replied, with the accent of the marital sovereignty:

"If he is rich let him have a doctor. If he is not rich let him not have any. If he doesn't have a doctor he will die."

"And if he does have one?"

"He will die," said the porter.

The portress began to dig up with an old knife some grass which was sprouting in what she called her pavement, and, while she was pulling up the grass, she muttered:

"It is a pity. An old man who is so nice! He is white as a chicken."

She saw a physician of the quartier passing at the end of the street; she took it upon herself to beg him to go up.

"It is on the second floor," said she to him. "You will have nothing to do but go in. As the good man does not stir from his bed now, the key is in the door all the time."

The physician saw Jean Valjean and spoke with him.

When he came down the portress questioned him:

"Well, doctor?"

"Your sick man is very sick."

"What is the matter with him?"

"Everything and nothing. He is a man who, to all appearance, has lost some dear friend. People die of that."

"What did he tell you?"

"He told me that he was well."

"Will you come again, doctor?"

"Yes," answered the physician. "But another than I must come again."

### III

#### A PEN IS HEAVY TO HIM WHO LIFTED FAUCHELEVENT'S CART

ONE evening Jean Valjean had difficulty in raising himself upon his elbow; he felt his wrist and found no pulse; his breathing was short and stopped at intervals; he realized that he was weaker than he had been before. Then, undoubtedly under the pressure of some supreme desire, he made an effort, sat up in bed and dressed himself. He put on his old workingman's garb. As he went out no longer he had returned to it, and he preferred it. He was obliged to stop several times while dressing; the mere effort of putting on his waistcoat made the sweat roll down his forehead.

Since he had been alone he had made his bed in the ante-room, so as to occupy this desolate tenement as little as possible.

He opened the valise and took out Cosette's suit.

He spread it out upon his bed.

The bishop's candlesticks were in their place on the mantel. He took two wax tapers from a drawer and put them into the candlesticks. Then, although it was still



broad daylight, it was in summer, he lighted them. We sometimes see torches lighted thus in broad day, in rooms where the dead lie.

Each step that he took in going from one piece of furniture to another exhausted him and he was obliged to sit down. It was not ordinary fatigue which spends the strength that it may be renewed; it was the remnant of possible motion; it was exhausted life pressed out drop by drop in overwhelming efforts never to be made again.

One of the chairs upon which he sank was standing before that mirror, so fatal for him, so providential for Marius, in which he had read Cosette's note, reversed on the blotter. He saw himself in this mirror and did not recognize himself. He was eighty years old; before Marius' marriage, one would hardly have thought him fifty; this year had counted thirty. What was now upon his forehead was not the wrinkle of age, it was the mysterious mark of death. You perceived on it the impress of the relentless talon. His cheeks were sunken; the skin of his face was of that color which suggests the idea of earth already above it; the corners of his mouth were depressed as in that mask which the ancients sculptured upon tombs; he looked at the hollowness with a look of reproach; you would have said it was one of those grand tragic beings who rise in judgment.

He was in that condition, the last phase of dejection, in which sorrow no longer flows; it is, so to speak, coagulated; the soul is covered as if with a clot of despair.

Night had come. With much labor he drew a table and the old armchair near the fireplace and put upon the table pen, ink, and paper.

Then he fainted. When he regained consciousness he was thirsty. Being unable to lift the water-pitcher, with great effort he tipped it toward his mouth and drank a swallow.

Then he turned to the bed, and, still sitting, for he could stand but a moment, he looked at the little black dress and all those dear objects.

Such contemplations last for hours, which seem minutes. Suddenly he shivered; he felt that chill was coming; he leaned upon the table which was lighted by the bishop's candlesticks and took the pen.

As neither the pen nor the ink had been used for a long time, the tip of the pen was bent back, the ink was dried; he was obliged to get up and put a few drops of water into the ink, which he could not do without stopping and sitting down two or three times; and he was compelled to write with the back of the pen. He wiped his forehead from time to time.

His hand trembled. He slowly wrote the few lines which follow:

Cosette, I bless you. I am going to make an explanation to you. Your husband was quite right in giving me to understand that I ought to leave; still there is some mistake in what he believed, but he was right. He is very good. Always love him well when I am dead. M. Pontmercy, always love my darling child. Cosette, this paper will be found, this is what I want to tell you, you shall see the figures, if I have the strength to recall them; listen well, this money is really your own. This is the whole story: the white jet comes from Norway, black jet comes from England, the black glass imitation comes from Germany. The jet is lighter, more precious, more costly. We can make imitations in France as well as in Germany. It requires a little anvil two inches square, and a spirit-lamp to soften the wax. The wax was formerly made with resin and lamp-black, and cost four francs a pound. I hit upon making it with gum lac and turpentine. This costs only thirty sous, and it is much better. The buckles are made of a violet glass, which is fastened by means of this wax to a narrow rim of black iron. The glass should be violet for iron trinkets, and black for gold trinkets. Spain purchases many of them. That is the country of jet—

Here he stopped, the pen fell from his fingers, he gave way to one of those despairing sobs which rose at times from the depths of his being, the poor man clasped his head with both hands and reflected.

“Oh!” exclaimed he within himself (pitiful cries, heard by God alone), “it is all over. I shall never see her more. She is a smile which has passed over me. I am going to enter into the night without even seeing her again. Oh! a minute, an instant, to hear her voice, to touch her dress, to look at her, the angel! and then to die! It is nothing to die, but it is dreadful to die without seeing her. She would smile upon me, she would say a word to me. Would that harm anybody? No, it is over, forever. Here I am, all alone. My God! my God! I shall never see her again.”

At this moment there was a rap at his door.

## IV

## A BOTTLE OF INK WHICH SERVES ONLY TO WHITEN

THAT very day, or rather that very evening, just as Marius had left the table and retired into his office, having a bundle of papers to study over, Basque had handed him a letter, saying: "The person who wrote the letter is in the ante-chamber." Cosette had taken grandfather's arm and was walking in the garden.

A letter, as well as a man, may have a forbidding appearance. Coarse paper, clumsy fold, the mere sight of certain missives displeases. The letter which Basque brought was of this kind.

Marius took it. It smelt of tobacco. Nothing awakens a reminiscence like an odor. Marius recognized this tobacco. He looked at the address: "To Monsieur, Monsieur the Baron Pommerci. In his hotel." The recognition of the tobacco made him recognize the handwriting. We might say that astonishment has it flashes. Marius was, as it were, illuminated by one of those flashes.

The scent, that mysterious aid to memory, revived a whole world within him. Here was the very paper, the manner of folding, the paleness of the ink; here was, indeed, the well-known handwriting; above all, here was the tobacco. The Jondrette garret appeared before him.

Thus, strange freak of chance! one of the two traces which he had sought so long, the one which he had again recently made so many efforts to gain, and which he believed forever lost, came of itself to him.

He broke the seal eagerly, and read:

"M. BARON: If the Supreme Being had given me the talents for it, I could have been Baron Thénard, member of the Institute (Academy of Sciences), but I am not so. I merely bear the same name that he does, happy if this remembrance commends me to the excellence of your bounties. The benefit with which you honor me will be reciprocal. I am in possession of a secret concerning an individual. This individual concerns you. I hold the secret at your disposition, desiring to have the honor of being yuseful to you. I will give you the simple means of drivving from your honourable family this individual who has no right in it, Madame the Baronness being of high birth. The sanctuary of virtue could not coabit longer with crime without abdicating. I atend in the entichamber the orders of Monsieur the Baron. With respect,

THÉNARD."



This signature was not a false one. It was only a little abridged.

Besides, the rigmarole and the orthography completed the revelation. The certificate of origin was perfect. There was no doubt possible.

The emotion of Marius was deep. After the feeling of surprise, he had a feeling of happiness. Let him now find the other man whom he sought, and the man who had saved him, Marius, and he would have nothing more to wish.

He opened one of his secretary drawers, took out some banknotes, put them in his pocket, closed the secretary, and rang. Basque appeared.

"Show him in," said Marius:

Basque announced: "M. Thénard."

A man entered.

A new surprise for Marius. The man who came in was perfectly unknown to him.

This man, old withal, had a large nose, his chin in his cravat, green spectacles, with double shade of green silk over his eyes, his hair polished and smoothed down his forehead close to the eyebrows, like the wigs of English coachmen in high life. His hair was gray. He was dressed in black from head to foot; in a well-worn but tidy black; a bunch of trinkets, hanging from his fob, suggested a watch. He held an old hat in his hand. He walked with a stoop, and the crook of his back increased the lowliness of his bow.

What was striking at first sight was that this person's coat, too full, although carefully buttoned, did not seem to have been made for him. Here a short digression is necessary.

There was in Paris, at that period, in an old shanty, in the Rue Beautreillis, near the arsenal, an ingenious Jew, whose business it was to change a rascal into an honest man. Not for too long a time, which might have been uncomfortable for the rascal. The change was made at sight, for a day or two, at the rate of 30 sous a day, by means of a costume, resembling, as closely as possible, that of honest people generally. This renter of costumes was called *the changer*; the Parisian thieves had given him this name, and knew him by no other. He had a tolerably

complete wardrobe. The rags with which he tricked out his people were almost respectable. He had specialties and categories; upon each nail in his shop, hung, worn and rumpled, a social condition; here the magistrate's dress, there the curé's dress, there the banker's dress, in one corner the retired soldier's dress, in another the literary man's dress, further on the statesman's dress. This man was the costumer of the immense drama which knavery plays in Paris. His hut was the green-room whence robbery came forth, and whither swindling returned. A ragged rogue came to this wardrobe, laid down 30 sous, and chose, according to the part which he wished to play that day, the dress which suited him, and when he returned to the street the rogue was somebody. The next day the clothes were faithfully brought back, and the changer, who trusted everything to the robbers, was never robbed. These garments had one inconvenience—"they were not a fit"; not having been made for those who wore them, they were tight for this man, baggy for that, and fitted nobody. Every thief who exceeded the human average in smallness or in bigness was ill at ease in the costumes of the changer. He must be neither too fat nor too lean. The changer had provided only for ordinary men. He had taken the measure of the species in the person of the first chance vagabond, who was neither thick nor thin, neither tall nor short. Hence adaptations, sometimes difficult, with which the changer's customers got along as well as they could. So much the worse for the exceptions! The statesman's dress, for instance, black from top to toe, and consequently suitable, would have been too large for Pitt and too small for Castalcicala. The statesman's suit was described as follows in the changer's catalogue. We copy: "A black cloth coat, pantaloons of black double-milled cassimere; a silk waistcoat, boots and linen." There was in the margin: "*Ancient ambassador*," and a note which we also transcribe: "In a separate box, a wig neatly frizzled, green spectacles, trinkets, and two little quill tubes an inch in length, wrapped in cotton." This all went with the statesman, ancient ambassador. This entire costume was, if we may use the word, emaciated; the seams were turning white; an undefined buttonhole was appearing at one of the elbows; moreover, a button was missing on the

breast of the coat; but this was a slight matter. As the statesman's hand ought always to be within the coat and upon the heart, its function was to conceal the absent button.

If Marius had been familiar with the occult institutions of Paris he would have recognized immediately on the back of the visitor whom Basque had just introduced the statesman's coat borrowed from the un-hook-me-that of the changer.

Marius' disappointment on seeing another man enter than the one he was expecting turned into dislike toward the new-comer. He examined him from head to foot, while the personage bowed without measure, and asked him in a sharp tone:

"What do you want?"

The man answered with an amiable grin of which the caressing smile of a crocodile would give some idea:

"It seems to me impossible that I have not already had the honor of seeing M. l'Baron in society. I really think that I met him privately some years ago at Mme. l'Princess Bagration's and in the salons of his lordship the Viscount Dambray, peer of France."

It is always good tactics in rascality to pretend to recognize one whom you do not know.

Marius listened attentively to the voice of this man. He watched for the tone and gesture eagerly, but his disappointment increased; it was a whining pronunciation, entirely different from the sharp and dry sound of voice which he expected. He was completely bewildered.

"I don't know," said he, "either Mme. Bagration or M. Dambray. I have never in my life set foot in the house of either the one or the other."

The answer was testy. The person, gracious notwithstanding, persisted:

"Then it must be at Chateaubriand's that I have seen monsieur? I know Chateaubriand well. He is very affable. He says to me sometimes: 'Thénard, my friend, won't you drink a glass of wine with me?'"

Marius brow grew more and more severe.

"I have never had the honor of being received at M. de Chateaubriand's. Come to the point. What is it you wish?"



The man, in view of the harsher voice, made a lower bow.

"M. l'Baron, deign to listen to me. There is in America, in a region which is near Panama, a village called La Joya. This village is composed of a single house. A large square, three-story adobe house, each side of the square 500 feet long, each story set back twelve feet from the story below, so as to leave in front a terrace which runs round the building, in the centre an interior court, in which are provisions and ammunitions, no windows, no loopholes, no door, ladders, ladders to mount from the ground to the first terrace, and from the first to the second, and from the second to the third, ladders to descend into the interior court, no doors to the rooms, hatchways, no stairs to the rooms, ladders; at night the hatchways are closed, the ladders drawn in; swivels and carbines are aimed through the portholes; no means of entering; a house by day, a citadel by night, 800 inhabitants, such is this village. Why so much precaution? because the country is dangerous; it is full of anthropophagi. Then why do people go there? because that country is wonderful; gold is found there."

"What are you coming to?" interrupted Marius, who from disappointment was passing to impatience.

"To this, M. l'Baron. I am an old weary diplomatist. The old civilization has used me up. I wish to try the savages."

"What then?"

"M. l'Baron, selfishness is the law of the world. The proletarian countrywoman who works by the day, turns round when the diligence passes; the proprietary countrywoman who works in her own field does not turn round. The poor man's dog barks at the rich man, the rich man's dog barks at the poor man. Every one for himself. Interest is the motive of men. Gold is the loadstone."

"What then? Conclude."

"I would like to go and establish myself at La Joya. There are three of us. I have my spouse and my young lady; a girl who is very beautiful. The voyage is long and dear. I must have a little money."

"How does that concern me?" inquired Marius.

The stranger stretched his neck out of his cravat, a

movement characteristic of the vulture, and replied, with redoubled smiles:

"Then M. l'Baron has not read my letter?"

That was not far from true. The fact is, that the contents of the epistle had glanced off from Marius. He had seen the handwriting rather than read the letter. He scarcely remembered it. Within a moment a new clew had been given him. He had noticed this remark: "My spouse and my young lady." He fixed a searching eye upon the stranger. An examining judge could not have done better. He seemed to be lying in ambush for him. He answered:

"Explain."

The stranger thrust his hands into his fobs, raised his head without straightening his backbone, but scrutinizing Marius in his turn with the green gaze of his spectacles.

"Certainly, M. l'Baron. I will explain. I have a secret to sell you."

"A secret?"

"A secret."

"Which concerns me?"

"Somewhat."

"What is the secret?"

Marius examined the man more and more closely while listening to him.

"I commence gratis," said the stranger. "You will see that I am interesting."

"Go on."

"M. l'Baron, you have in your house a robber and an assassin."

Marius shuddered.

"In my house? no," said he.

The stranger, imperturbable, brushed his hat with his sleeve, and continued:

"Assassin and robber. Observe, M. l'Baron, that I do not speak here of acts, old, by-gone, and withered, which may be canceled by prescription in the eye of the law, and by repentance in the eye of God. I speak of recent acts, present acts, acts yet unknown to justice at this hour. I will proceed. This man has glided into your confidence, and almost into your family, under a false name. I am

going to tell you his true name. And tell it to you for nothing."

"I am listening."

"His name is Jean Valjean."

"I know it."

"I am going to tell you, also for nothing, who he is."

"Say on."

"He is an old convict."

"I know it."

"You know it since I have had the honor of telling you."

"No. I knew it before."

Marius' cool tone, that double reply, "*I know it*," his laconic method of speech, embarrassing to conversation, excited some suppressed anger in the stranger. He shot furtively at Marius a furious look, which was immediately extinguished. Quick as it was, this look was one of those which are recognized after they have once been seen; it did not escape Marius. Certain flames can only come from certain souls; the eye, that window of the thought, blazes with it; spectacles hide nothing; you might as well put a glass over hell.

The stranger resumed with a smile:

"I do not permit myself to contradict M. l'Baron. At all events, you must see that I am informed. Now, what I have to acquaint you with is known to myself alone. It concerns the fortune of Mme. l'Baroness. It is an extraordinary secret. It is for sale; I offer it to you first. Cheap; 20,000 francs."

"I know that secret as well as the others," said Marius.

The person felt the necessity of lowering his price a little.

"M. l'Baron, say 10,000 francs, and I will go on."

"I repeat that you have nothing to acquaint me with. I know what you wish to tell me."

There was a new flash in the man's eye. He exclaimed:

"Still, I must dine to-day. It is an extraordinary secret, I tell you. M. l'Baron, I am going to speak. I will speak. Give me 20 francs."

Marius looked at him steadily:

"I know your extraordinary secret just as I knew Jean Valjean's name just as I know your name."



"My name?"

"Yes."

"That is not difficult, M. l'Baron, I have had the honor of writing it to you and telling you. Thénard."

"Dier."

"Eh?"

"Thenardier."

"Who is that?"

In danger the porcupine bristles, the beetle feigns death, the old guard forms a square; this man began to laugh.

Then, with a fillip, he brushed a speck of dust from his coat-sleeve.

Marius continued:

"You are also the workingman Jondrette, the comedian Fabantou, the poet Genflot, the Spaniard Don Alvarés, and the woman Balizard."

"The woman what?"

"And you have kept a chop-house at Montfermeil."

"A chop-house! never."

"And I tell you that you are Thenardier."

"I deny it."

"And that you are a scoundrel. Here."

And Marius, taking a banknote from his pocket, threw it in his face.

"Thanks! pardon! 500 francs! M. l'Baron!"

And the man, bewildered, bowing, catching the note, examined it.

"Five hundred francs!" he repeated in astonishment. And he stammered out in an undertone: "A serious *faiot*!"

Then bluntly: "Well, so be it," exclaimed he. "Let us make ourselves comfortable."

And, with the agility of a monkey, throwing his hair off backward, pulling off his spectacles, taking out of his nose and pocketing the two quill tubes of which we have just spoken, and which we have already seen elsewhere on another page of this book, he took off his countenance as one takes off his hat.

His eyes kindled; his forehead, uneven, ravined, humped in spots, hideously wrinkled at the top, emerged; his nose became as sharp as a beak; the fierce and cunning profile of the man of prey appeared again.

"M. l'Baron is infallible," said he, in a clear voice, from which all nasality had disappeared, "I am Thenardier."

And he straightened his bent back.

Thenardier, for it was indeed he, was strangely surprised; he would have been disconcerted if he could have been. He had come to bring astonishment and he himself received it. This humiliation had been compensated by 500 francs, and, all things considered, he accepted it; but he was none the less astounded.

He saw this Baron Pontmercy for the first time, and, in spite of his disguise, this Baron Pontmercy recognized him, and recognized him thoroughly. And not only was this baron fully informed in regard to Thenardier, but he seemed fully informed in regard to Jean Valjean. Who was this almost beardless young man, so icy and so generous, who knew people's names, who knew all their names, and who opened his purse to them, who abused rogues like a judge and who paid them like a dupe?

Thenardier, it will be remembered, although he had been a neighbor of Marius, had never seen him, which is frequent in Paris; he had once heard some talk of his daughters about a very poor young man named Marius who lived in the house. He had written to him, without knowing him, the letter which we have seen. No connection was possible in his mind between that Marius and M. l'Baron Pontmercy.

Through his daughter Azelma, however, whom he had put upon the track of the couple married on the 16th of February, and through his own researches, he had succeeded in finding out many things, and, from the depths of his darkness, he had been able to seize more than one mysterious clew. He had, by dint of industry, discovered, or, at least, by dint of induction, guessed who the man was whom he had met on a certain day in the Grand sewer. From the man he had easily arrived at the name. He knew that Mme. l'Baroness Pontmercy was Cosette. But, in that respect, he intended to be prudent. Who was Cosette? He did not know exactly himself. He suspected, indeed, some illegitimacy. Fantine's story always had seemed to him ambiguous; but why speak of it? To get paid for his silence! He had, or thought he had, something better to sell than that. And to all appearance to

come and make, without any proof, this revelation to Baron Pontmercy: "Your wife is a bastard," would only have attracted the husband's boot toward the revelator's back.

In Thenardier's opinion the conversation with Marius had not yet commenced. He had been obliged to retreat, to modify his strategy, to abandon a position, to change his base; but nothing essential was yet lost and he had 500 francs in his pocket. Moreover, he had something decisive to say, and even against this Baron Pontmercy, so well informed and so well armed, he felt himself strong. To men of Thenardier's nature every dialogue is a battle. In that which was about to be commenced what was his situation? He did not know to whom he was speaking, but he knew about what he was speaking. He rapidly made this interior review of his forces, and, after saying, "I am Thenardier," he waited.

Marius remained absorbed in thought. At last, then, he had caught Thenardier; this man, whom he had so much desired to find again, was before him; so he would be able to do honor to Colonel Pontmercy's injunction. He was humiliated that that hero should owe anything to this bandit, and that the bill of exchange drawn by his father from the depth of the grave upon him, Marius, should have been protested until this day. It appeared to him, also, in the complex condition of his mind in regard to Thenardier, that here was an opportunity to avenge the colonel for the misfortune of having been saved by such a rascal. However that might be, he was pleased. He was about to deliver the colonel's shade, at last, from this unworthy creditor, and it seemed to him that he was about to release his father's memory from imprisonment for debt.

Besides this duty he had another to clear up if he could, the source of Cosette's fortune. The opportunity seemed to present itself. Thenardier knew something, perhaps. It might be useful to probe this man to the bottom. He began with that.

Thenardier had slipped the "serious *fafiot*" into his fob and was looking at Marius with an almost affectionate humility.

Marius interrupted the silence.

"Thenardier, I have told you your name. Now your secret, what you came to make known to me; do you want



me to tell you that? I, too, have my means of information. You shall see that I know more about it than you do. Jean Valjean, as you have said, is an assassin and a robber. A robber, because he robbed a rich manufacturer, M. Madeleine, whose ruin he caused; an assassin, because he assassinated the police officer, Javert."

"I don't understand, M. l'Baron," said Thenardier.

"I will make myself understood. Listen. There was, in an arrondissement of the Pas-de-Calais, about 1822, a man who had had some old difficulty with justice, and who, under the name of M. Madeleine, had reformed and re-established himself. He had become in the full force of the term an upright man. By means of a manufacture, that of black glass trinkets, he had made the fortune of an entire city. As for his own personal fortune, he had made it also, but secondarily, and in some sort, incidentally. He was the foster father of the poor. He founded hospitals, opened schools, visited the sick, endowed daughters, supported widows, adopted orphans; he was, as it were, the guardian of the country. He had refused the Cross, he had been appointed mayor. A liberated convict knew the secret of a penalty once incurred by this man; he informed against him and had him arrested, and took advantage of the arrest to come to Paris and draw from the banker, Laffitte—I have the fact from the cashier himself—by means of a false signature, a sum of more than 500,000 francs which belonged to M. Madeleine. This convict who robbed M. Madeleine is Jean Valjean. As to the other act, you have just as little to tell me. Jean Valjean killed the officer Javert; he killed him with a pistol. I, who am now speaking to you, I was present."

Thenardier cast upon Marius the sovereign glance of a beaten man, who lays hold on victory again, and who has just recovered in one minute all the ground which he had lost. But the smile returned immediately; the inferior before the superior can only have a skulking triumph, and Thenardier merely said to Marius:

"M. l'Baron, we are on the wrong track."

And he emphasized this phrase by giving his bunch of trinkets an expressive twirl.

"What!" replied Marius, "do you deny that? These are facts."

"They are chimeras. The confidence with which M. l'Baron honors me makes it my duty to tell him so. Before all things, truth and justice. I do not like to see people accused unjustly. M. l'Baron, Jean Valjean never robbed M. Madeleine, and Jean Valjean never killed Javert."

"You speak strongly; how is that?"

"For two reasons."

"What are they? tell me."

"The first is this: he did not rob M. Madeleine, since it is Jean Valjean himself who was M. Madeleine."

"What is that you are telling me?"

"And the second is this: he did not assassinate Javert, since Javert himself killed Javert."

"What do you mean?"

"That Javert committed suicide."

"Prove it! prove it!" cried Marius, beside himself.

Thenardier resumed, scanning his phrase in the fashion of an ancient Alexandrine:

"The — police — of — ficer — Ja — vert — was — found — drowned — un — der — a — boat — by — the — Pont au — Change."

"But prove it now."

Thenardier took from his pocket a large envelope of gray paper, which seemed to contain folded sheets of different sizes.

"I have my documents," said he, with calmness.

And he added:

"M. l'Baron, in your interest, I wished to find out Jean Valjean to the bottom. I say that Jean Valjean and Madeleine are the same man; and I say that Javert had no other assassin than Javert; and when I speak I have the proofs. Not manuscript proofs; writing is suspicious; writing is complaisant, but proofs in print."

While speaking Thenardier took out of the envelope two newspapers—yellow, faded, and strongly saturated with tobacco. One of these two newspapers, broken at all the folds and falling in square pieces, seemed much older than the other.

"Two facts, two proofs," said Thenardier. And, unfolding the two papers, he handed them to Marius.

With these two newspapers the reader is acquainted.

One, the older, a copy of the *Drapeau Blanc*, of the 25th of July, 1823, the text of which can be found on page 367 of the first volume in this book, established the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean. The other, a *Moniteur*, of the 15th of June, 1832, verified the suicide of Javert, adding that it appeared from a verbal report made by Javert to the prefect that, taken prisoner in the barricade of the Rue de la Chanvrerie, he had owed his life to the magnanimity of an insurgent who, though he had him at the muzzle of his pistol, instead of blowing out his brains, had fired into the air.

Marius read. There was evidence, certain date, unquestionable proof; these two newspapers had not been printed expressly to support Thenardier's words. The note published in the *Moniteur* was an official communication from the préfecture of police. Marius could not doubt. The information derived from the cashier was false, and he himself was mistaken. Jean Valjean, suddenly growing grand, arose from the cloud. Marius could not restrain a cry of joy.

"Well, then, this unhappy man was a wonderful man! All that fortune was really his own! He is Madeleine, the providence of a whole region! He is Jean Valjean, the savior of Javert! He is a hero! he is a saint!"

"He is not a saint, and he is not a hero," said Thenardier. "He is an assassin and a robber."

And he added with the tone of a man who begins to feel some authority in himself: "Let us be calm."

Robber, assassin; these words, which Marius supposed were gone, yet which came back, fell upon him like a shower of ice.

"Again," said he.

"Still," said Thenardier, "Jean Valjean did not rob Madeleine; but he is a robber. He did not kill Javert, but he is a murderer."

"Will you speak," resumed Marius, "of that petty theft of forty years ago, expiated, as it appears from your newspapers themselves, by a whole life of repentance, abnegation, and virtue?"

"I said assassination and robbery, M. l'Baron. And I repeat that I speak of recent facts. What I have to reveal to you is absolutely unknown. It belongs to the unpub-



lished. And perhaps you will find it in the source of the fortune adroitly presented by Jean Valjean to Mme. l'Baroness. I say, adroitly, for, by a donation of this kind, to glide into an honorable house, the comforts of which he will share, and by the same stroke to conceal his crime, to enjoy his robbery, to bury his name, and to create himself a family, that would not be very unskilful."

"I might interrupt you here," observed Marius; "but continue."

"M. l'Baron, I will tell you all, leaving recompense to your generosity. This secret is worth a pile of gold. You may say to me: why have you not gone to Jean Valjean? For a very simple reason; I know that he has dispossessed himself, and dispossessed himself in your favor, and I think the contrivance ingenious; but he has not a sou left; he would show me his empty hands, and, since I need some money for my voyage to La Joya, I prefer you, who have all, to him who has nothing. I am somewhat fatigued; allow me to take a chair."

Marius sat down and made signs for him to sit down.

Thenardier installed himself in a cappadine chair, took up the two newspapers, thrust them back into the envelope, and muttered, striking the *Drapeau Blanc* with his nail: "It cost me some hard work to get this one." This done, he crossed his legs and lay back in his chair, an attitude characteristic of people who are sure of what they are saying, then entered into the subject seriously, and emphasizing his words:

"M. l'Baron, on the 6th of June, 1832, about a year ago, the day of the émeute, a man was in the Grand sewer of Paris, near where the sewer empties into the Seine, between the Pont des Invalides and the Pont d'Iéna."

Marius suddenly drew his chair near Thenardier's. Thenardier noticed this movement, and continued with the deliberation of a speaker who holds his interlocutor fast, and who feels the palpitation of his adversary beneath his words:

"This man, compelled to conceal himself, for reasons foreign to politics, however, had taken the sewer for his dwelling, and had a key to it. It was, I repeat it, the 6th of June; it might have been 8 o'clock in the evening. The man heard a noise in the sewer. Very much sur-

prised, he hid himself and watched. It was a sound of steps, somebody was walking in the darkness; somebody was coming in his direction. Strange to say, there was another man in the sewer besides him. The grating of the outlet of the sewer was not far off. A little light which came from it enabled him to recognize the new-comer, and to see that this man was carrying something on his back. He walked bent over. The man who was walking bent over was an old convict, and what he was carrying upon his shoulders was a corpse. Assassination in *flagrante delictu*, if ever there was such a thing. As for robbery, it follows of course; nobody kills a man for nothing. This convict was going to throw this corpse into the river. It is a noteworthy fact, that before reaching the grating of the outlet, this convict, who had come from a distance in the sewer, had been compelled to pass through a horrible quagmire in which it would seem that he might have left the corpse; but, the sewermen working upon the quagmire might, the next day, have found the assassinated man, and that was not the assassin's game. He preferred to go through the quagmire with his load, and his efforts must have been terrible; it is impossible to put one's life in greater peril; I do not understand how he came out of it alive."

Marius' chair drew still nearer. Thenardier took advantage of it to draw a long breath. He continued:

"M. l'Baron, a sewer is not the Champ de Mars. One lacks everything there, even room. When two men are in a sewer they must meet each other. That is what happened. The resident and the traveler were compelled to say good-day to each other, to their mutual regret. The traveler said to the resident: 'You see what I have on my back; I must get out, you have the key, give it to me.' The convict was a man of terrible strength. There was no refusing him. Still he who had the key parleyed, merely to gain time. He examined the dead man, but he could see nothing, except that he was young, well dressed, apparently a rich man, and all disfigured with blood. While he was talking he found means to cut and tear off from behind, without the assassin perceiving it, a piece of the assassinated man's coat. A piece of evidence, you understand; means of getting trace of the affair, and proving the crime upon the criminal. He put this piece of evidence in his

pocket. After which he opened the grating, let the man out with his incumbrance on his back, shut the grating again and escaped, little caring to be mixed up with the remainder of the adventure, and especially desiring not to be present when the assassin should throw the assassinated man into the river. You understand now. He who was carrying the corpse was Jean Valjean; he who had the key, is now speaking to you, and the piece of the coat—”

Thenardier finished the phrase by drawing from his pocket and holding up on a level with his eyes, between his thumbs and his forefingers, a strip of ragged black cloth, covered with dark stain.

Marius had risen, pale, hardly breathing, his eye fixed upon the scrap of black cloth, and, without uttering a word, without losing sight of this rag, he retreated to the wall, and, with his right hand stretched behind him, groped about for a key which was in a lock of a closet near the chimney. He found this key, opened the closet, and thrust his arm into it without removing his startled eyes from the fragment that Thenardier held up.

Meanwhile Thenardier continued:

“M. l’Baron, I have the strongest reasons to believe that the assassinated young man was an opulent stranger drawn into a snare by Jean Valjean, and the bearer of an enormous sum.”

“The young man was myself and there is the coat,” cried Marius, and he threw an old black coat, covered with blood, upon the carpet.

Then, snatching the fragment from Thenardier’s hands, he bent down over the coat and applied the piece to the cut skirt. The edges fitted exactly, and the strip completed the coat.

Thenardier was petrified. He thought this: “I am floored.”

Marius rose up, quivering, desperate, flashing.

He felt in his pocket and walked furious toward Thenardier, offering him and almost pushing into his face his fist full of 500 and 1,000 franc notes.

“You are a wretch! you are a liar! a slanderer, a scoundrel. You came to accuse this man, you have justified him; you wanted to destroy him, you have succeeded only in glorifying him. And it is you who are a robber!



and it is you who are an assassin! I saw you, Thenardier Jondrette, in that den on the Boulevard de l'Hôpital. I know enough about you to send you to the galleys, and further even, if I wished. Here, there are 1,000 francs, braggart that you are!"

And he threw a bill for 1,000 francs to Thenardier.

"Ah! Jondrette Thenardier, vile knave! let this be a lesson to you, pedler of secrets, trader of mysteries, fumbler in the dark, wretch! Take these 500 francs and leave this place! Waterloo protects you."

"Waterloo!" muttered Thenardier, pocketing the 500 francs with the 1,000 francs.

"Yes, assassin! for you saved the life of a colonel there—"

"Of a general," said Thenardier, raising his head.

"Of a colonel!" replied Marius, with a burst of passion. "I would not give a farthing for a general. And you came here to act out your infamy! I tell you that you have committed every crime. Go! out of my sight! Be happy only, that is all that I desire. Ah! monster! there are 3,000 francs more. Take them. You will start to-morrow for America with your daughter, for your wife is dead, abominable liar. I will see to your departure, bandit, and I will count out to you then 20,000 francs. Go, get hung elsewhere!"

"M. l'Baron," said Thenardier, bowing to the ground, "eternal gratitude."

And Thenardier went out, comprehending nothing, astounded and transported with this sweet crushing under sacks of gold, and with this thunderbolt bursting upon his head in banknotes.

Thunderstruck he was, but happy also; and he would have been very sorry to have had a lightning rod against that thunderbolt.

Let us finish with this man at once. Two days after the events which we are now relating, he left, through Marius' care, for America, under a false name, with his daughter Azelma, provided with a draft upon New York for 20,000 francs. The moral misery of Thenardier, the broken-down bourgeois, was irremediable; he was in America what he had been in Europe. The touch of a wicked man is often enough to corrupt a good deed and to make

an evil result spring from it. With Marius' money, Thenardier became a slaver.

As soon as Thenardier was out of doors Marius ran to the garden where Cosette was still walking.

"Cosette! Cosette!" cried he. "Come! come quick! Let us go, Basque, a fiacre! Cosette, come. Oh! my God! It was he who saved my life! Let us not lose a minute! Put on your shawl!"

Cosette thought him mad and obeyed.

He did not breathe, he put his hand upon his heart to repress its beating. He walked to and fro with rapid strides, he embraced Cosette. "Oh! Cosette! I am an unhappy man!" said he.

Marius was in a maze. He began to see in this Jean Valjean a strangely lofty and saddened form. An unparalleled virtue appeared before him, supreme and mild, humble in its immensity. The convict was transfigured into Christ. Marius was bewildered by this marvel. He did not know exactly what he saw, but it was grand.

In a moment a fiacre was at the door.

Marius helped Cosette in and sprang in himself.

"Driver," said he, "Rue de l'Homme Armé, No. 7."

The fiacre started.

"Oh! what happiness!" said Cosette. "Rue de l'Homme Armé. I dared not speak to you of it again. We are going to see M. Jean."

"Your father! Cosette, your father more than ever. Cosette, I see it. You told me that you never received the letter which I sent you by Gavroche. It must have fallen into his hands. Cosette, he went to the barricade to save me. As it is a necessity for him to be an angel, on the way, he saved others, he saved Javert. He snatched me out of that gulf to give me to you. He carried me on his back in that frightful sewer. Oh! I am an unnatural ingrate. Cosette, after having been your providence he was mine. Only think that there was a horrible quagmire, enough to drown him a hundred times, to drown him in the mire—Cosette! he carried me through that. I had fainted, I saw nothing, I heard nothing, I could know nothing of my own fate. We are going to bring him back, take him with us; whether he will or no, he shall never leave us again. If he is only at home! If we only find

him! I will pass the rest of my life in venerating him. Yes, that must be it, do you see, Cosette? Gavroche must have handed my letter to him. It is all explained. You understand."

Cosette did not understand a word.

"You are right," said she to him.

Meanwhile, the fiacre rolled on.

## V

### NIGHT, BEHIND WHICH IS DAWN

AT the knock which he heard at his door Jean Valjean turned his head.

"Come in," said he, feebly.

The door opened. Cosette and Marius appeared.

Cosette rushed into the room.

Marius remained upon the threshold, leaning against the casing of the door.

"Cosette!" said Jean Valjean, and he rose in his chair, his arms stretched out and trembling, haggard, livid, terrible, with immense joy in his eyes.

Cosette, stifled with emotion, fell upon Jean Valjean's breast.

"Father!" said she.

Jean Valjean, beside himself, stammered:

"Cosette! she? You, madame? It is you, Cosette? Oh, my God!"

And, clasped in Cosette's arms, he exclaimed:

"It is you, Cosette? You are here? You forgive me, then?"

Marius, dropping his eyelids that the tears might not fall, stepped forward and murmured between his lips, which were contracted convulsively to check the sobs:

"Father!"

"And you, too, you forgive me!" said Jean Valjean.

Marius could not utter a word, and Jean Valjean added: "Thanks."

Cosette took off her shawl and threw her hat upon the bed.

"They are in my way," said she.

And, seating herself upon the old man's knees, she



stroked away his white hair with an adorable grace and kissed his forehead.

Jean Valjean, bewildered, offered no resistance.

Cosette, who had but a very confused understanding of all this, redoubled her caresses, as if she would pay Marius' debt.

Jean Valjean faltered.

"How foolish we are! I thought I should never see her again. Only think, M. Pontmercy, that at the moment you came in I was saying to myself: 'It is over. There is her little dress, I am a miserable man, I shall never see Cosette again. I was saying that at the very moment you were coming up the stairs. Was not I silly? I was as silly as that! But we reckon without God. God said: 'You think that you are going to be abandoned, dolt? No, it shall not come to pass like that. Come, here is a poor, good man who has need of an angel.' And the angel comes; and I see my Cosette again! and I see my darling Cosette again! Oh! I was very miserable!"

For a moment he could not speak, then he continued:

"I really needed to see Cosette a little while from time to time. A heart does want a bone to gnaw. Still, I felt plainly that I was in the way. I gave myself reasons; they have no need of you, stay in your corner, you have no right to continue forever. Oh! bless God, I see her again! Do you know, Cosette, that your husband is very handsome? Ah, you have a pretty embroidered collar, yes, yes. I like that pattern. Your husband chose it, did not he? And then, Cosette, you must have cashmeres. M. Pontmercy, let me call her Cosette. It will not be very long."

And Cosette continued again:

"How naughty to have left us in this way! Where have you been? why were you away so long? Your journey did not use to last more than three or four days. I sent Nicolette, the answer always was: 'He is absent.' How long since you returned? Why did you not let us know? Do you know that you are very much changed? Oh! the naughty father! he has been sick and we did not know it! Here, Marius, feel his hand, how cold it is!"

"So you are here, M. Pontmercy, you forgive me?" repeated Jean Valjean.

At these words, which Jean Valjean now said for the

second time, all that was swelling in Marius' heart found an outlet; he broke forth:

"Cosette, do you hear? that is the way with him! he begs my pardon, and do you know what he has done for me, Cosette? He has saved my life. He has done more. He has given you to me. And, after having saved me, and after having given you to me, Cosette, what did he do with himself? he sacrificed himself. There is the man. And, to me the ungrateful, to me the forgetful, to me the pitiless, to me the guilty, he says: 'Thanks!' Cosette, my whole life passed at the feet of this man would be too little. That barricade, that sewer, that furnace, that cloaca; he went through everything for me, for you, Cosette! He bore me through death in every form which he put aside from me, and which he accepted for himself. All courage, all virtue, all heroism, all sanctity; he has it all, Cosette; that man is an angel!"

"Hush! hush!" said Jean Valjean in a whisper. "Why tell all that?"

"But you!" explained Marius, with a passion in which veneration was mingled, "why have not you told it? It is your fault, too. You save people's lives, and you hide it from them. You do more, under pretence of unmasking yourself, you calumniate yourself. It is frightful."

"I told the truth," answered Jean Valjean.

"No," replied Marius, "the truth is the whole truth; and you did not tell it. You were M. Madeleine, why not have said so? You had saved Javert, why not have said so? I owe my life to you, why not have said so?"

"Because I thought as you did. I felt that you were right. It was necessary that I should go away. If you had known that affair of the sewer you would have made me stay with you. I should then have had to keep silent. If I had spoken it would have embarrassed all."

"Embarrassed what? embarrassed whom?" replied Marius. "Do you suppose you are going to stay here? We are going to carry you back. Oh! my God! when I think it was by accident that I learned it all! We are going to carry you back. You are a part of us. You are her father and mine. You shall not spend another day in this horrid house. Do not imagine that you will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow," said Jean Valjean, "I shall not be here, but I shall not be at your house."

"What do you mean?" replied Marius. "Ah, now, we shall allow no more journeys. You shall never leave us again. You belong to us. We will not let you go."

"This time it is for good," added Cosette. "We have a carriage below. I am going to carry you off. If necessary I shall use force."

And laughing, she made as if she would lift the old man in her arms.

"Your room is still in our house," she continued. "If you knew how pretty the garden is now. The azaleas are growing finely. The paths are sanded with river sand; there are some little violet shells. You shall eat some of my strawberries. I water them myself. And no more madame and no more M. Jean; we live in a republic, do we not, Marius? The programme is changed. If you knew, father, I have had some trouble; there was a redbreast which had made her nest in a hole in the wall, a horrid cat ate her up for me. My poor, pretty little redbreast who put her head out at her window and looked at me! I cried over it. I would have killed the cat! But now nobody cries any more. Everybody laughs, everybody is happy. You are coming with us. How glad grandfather will be! You shall have your bed in the garden, you shall tend it, and we shall see if your strawberries are as fine as mine. And then I will do whatever you wish, and then you will obey me."

Jean Valjean listened to her without hearing her. He heard the music of her voice rather than the meaning of her words; one of those big tears which are the gloomy peals of the soul gathered slowly in his eye. He murmured:

"The proof that God is good is that she is here."

"Father!" said Cosette.

Jean Valjean continued:

"It is very true that it would be charming to live together. They have their trees full of birds. I would walk with Cosette. To be with people who live, who bid each other good-morning, who call each other into the garden, would be sweet. We would see each other as soon as it was morning. We would each cultivate our little



corner. She would have me eat her strawberries. I would have her pick my roses. It would be charming. Only—”

He paused and said mildly:

“It is a pity.”

The tear did not fall, it went back and Jean Valjean replaced it with a smile.

Cosette took both the old man’s hands in her own.

“My God!” said she, “your hands are colder yet. Are you sick? Are you suffering?”

“No,” answered Jean Valjean. “I am very well. Only—”

He stopped.

“Only what?”

“I shall die in a few minutes.”

Cosette and Marius shuddered.

“Die!” exclaimed Marius.

“Yes, but that is nothing,” said Jean Valjean.

He breathed, smiled, and continued:

“Cosette, you were speaking to me; go on, speak again; your little redbreast is dead then; speak, let me hear your voice!”

Marius, petrified, gazed upon the old man.

Cosette uttered a piercing cry:

“Father! my father! you shall live. You are going to live. I will have you live, do you hear?”

Jean Valjean raised his head toward her with adoration.

“Oh, yes, forbid me to die. Who knows? I shall obey, perhaps. I was just dying when you came. That stopped me, it seemed to me that I was born again.”

“You are full of strength and life,” exclaimed Marius. “Do you think people die like that? You have had trouble, you shall have no more. I ask your pardon now, and that on my knees! You shall live and live with us, and live long. We will take you back. Both of us here will have but one thought henceforth, your happiness!”

“You see,” added Cosette, in tears, “that Marius says you will not die.”

Jean Valjean continued to smile.

“If you should take me back, M. Pontmercy, would that make me different from what I am? No; God thought as you and I did, and He has not changed His mind; it is best that I should go away. Death is a good arrangement.

God knows better than we do what we need. That you are happy; that M. Pontmercy has Cosette; that youth espouses morning; that there are about you, my children, lilacs and nightingales; that your life is a beautiful lawn in the sunshine; that all the enchantments of heaven fill your souls; and now that I, who am good for nothing, that I die. Surely all this is well. Look you, be reasonable; there is nothing else possible now; I am sure that it is all over. An hour ago I had a fainting fit. And then, last night, I drank that pitcher full of water. How good your husband is, Cosette! You are much better off than with me."

There was a noise at the door. It was the physician coming in.

"Good-day and good-by, doctor," said Jean Valjean. "Here are my poor children."

Marius approached the physician. He addressed this single word to him, "Monsieur?" but in the manner of pronouncing it there was a complete question.

The physician answered by an expressive glance.

"Because things are unpleasant," said Jean Valjean, "that is no reason for being unjust toward God."

There was a silence. All hearts were oppressed.

Jean Valjean turned toward Cosette. He began to gaze at her as if he would take a look which should endure through eternity. At the depth of shadow to which he had already descended, ecstasy was still possible to him while beholding Cosette. The reflection of that sweet countenance illumined his pale face. The sepulchre may have its enchantments.

The physician felt his pulse.

"Ah! it was you he needed!" murmured he, looking at Cosette and Marius.

And, bending toward Marius' ear, he added very low:

"Too late."

Jean Valjean, almost without ceasing to gaze upon Cosette, turned upon Marius and the physician a look of serenity. They heard these almost inarticulate words come from his lips:

"It is nothing to die; it is frightful not to live."

Suddenly he arose. These returns of strength are sometimes a sign also of the death struggle. He walked with

a firm step to the wall, put aside Marius and the physician, who offered to assist him, took down from the wall the little copper crucifix which hung there, came back and sat down with all the freedom of motion of perfect health, and said in a loud voice, laying the crucifix on the table:

"Behold the great martyr."

Then his breast sank in, his head wavered, as if the dizziness of the tomb seized him, and his hands, resting upon his knees, began to catch at his pantaloons.

Cosette supported his shoulders and sobbed, and attempted to speak to him, but could not. There could be distinguished, among the words mingled with that mournful saliva which accompanies tears, sentences like this: "Father, do not leave us. Is it possible that we have found you again only to lose you?"

The agony of death may be said to meander. It goes, comes, advances toward the grave, and returns toward life. There is some groping in the act of dying.

Jean Valjean, after this semi-syncope, gathered strength, shook his forehead as if to throw off the darkness, and became almost completely lucid once more. He took a fold of Cosette's sleeve and kissed it.

"He is reviving! doctor, he is reviving!" cried Marius.

"You are both kind," said Jean Valjean. "I will tell you what has given me pain. What has given me pain, M. Pontmercy, was that you have been unwilling to touch that money. That money really belongs to your wife. I will explain it to you, my children; on that account I am glad to see you. The black jet comes from England, the white jet comes from Norway. All this is in the paper you see there, which you will read. For bracelets I invented the substitution of clasps made by bending the metal for clasps made by soldering the metal. They are handsomer, better, and cheaper. You understand how much money can be made. So Cosette's fortune is really her own. I give you these particulars so that your minds may be at rest."

The portress had come up and was looking through the half-open door. The physician motioned her away, but he could not prevent that good, zealous woman from crying to the dying man before she went:

"Do you want a priest?"



"I have one," answered Jean Valjean.

And, with his finger he seemed to designate a point above his head, where, you would have said, he saw some one.

It is probable that the bishop was indeed a witness of this death agony.

Cosette slipped a pillow under his back gently.

Jean Valjean resumed:

"M. Pontmercy, have no fear, I conjure you. The 600,000 francs are really Cosette's. I shall have lost my life if you do not enjoy it! We succeeded very well in making glasswork. We rivaled what is called Berlin jewelry. Indeed, the German black glass can not be compared with it. A gross, which contains 1,200 grains very well cut, costs only three francs."

When a being who is dear to us is about to die, we look at him with a look which clings to him and which would hold him back. Both, dumb with anguish, knowing not what to say to death, despairing and trembling, they stood before him, Marius holding Cosette's hand.

From moment to moment Jean Valjean grew weaker. He was sinking; he was approaching the dark horizon. His breath had become intermittent; it was interrupted by a slight rattle. He had difficulty in moving his wrist, his feet had lost all motion, and, at the same time that the distress of the limbs and the exhaustion of the body increased, all the majesty of the soul rose and displayed itself upon his forehead. The light of the unknown world was already visible in his eye.

His face grew pale and at the same time smiled. Life was no longer present, there was something else. His breath died away, his look grew grand. It was a corpse on which you felt wings.

He motioned to Cosette to approach, then to Marius; it was evidently the last minute of the last hour, and he began to speak to them in a voice so faint it seemed to come from afar, and you would have said that there was already a wall between them and him.

"Come closer, come closer, both of you. I love you dearly. Oh! it is good to die so! You, too, you love me, my Cosette. I knew very well that you still had some affection for your old good man. How kind you are to

put this cushion under my back! You will weep for me a little, will you not? Not too much. I do not wish you to have any deep grief. You must amuse yourselves a great deal, my children. I forgot to tell you that on buckles without tongues still more is made than on anything else. A gross, twelve dozen, costs ten francs and sells for sixty. That is really a good business. So you need not be astonished at the 600,000 francs, M. Pontmercy. It is honest money. You can be rich without concern. You must have a carriage, from time to time a box at the theatres, beautiful ball dresses, my Cosette, and then give good dinners to your friends; be very happy. I was writing just now to Cosette. She will find my letter. To her I bequeath the two candlesticks which are on the mantel. They are silver; but to me they are gold, they are diamond; they change the candles which are put into them into consecrated tapers. I do not know whether he who gave them to me is satisfied with me in heaven. I have done what I could. My children, you will not forget that I am a poor man, you will have me buried in the most convenient piece of ground under a stone to mark the spot. That is my wish. No name on the stone. If Cosette will come for a little while sometimes it will give me a pleasure. You, too, M. Pontmercy. I must confess to you that I have not always loved you; I ask your pardon. Now, she and you are but one to me. I am very grateful to you. I feel that you make Cosette happy. If you knew, M. Pontmercy, her beautiful rosy cheeks were my joy; when I saw her a little pale I was sad. There is a five hundred-franc bill in the bureau. I have not touched it. It is for the poor. Cosette, do you see your little dress, there on the bed? Do you recognize it? Yet it was only ten years ago. How time passes! We have been very happy. It is over. My children, do not weep, I am not going very far, I shall see from there. You will only have to look when it is night, you will see me smile. Cosette, do you remember Montfermeil? You were in the wood, you were very much frightened; do you remember when I took the handle of the water bucket? That was the first time I touched your poor little hand. It was so cold! Ah! you had red hands in those days, mademoiselle. Your hands are very white now. And the great doll! do you remem-

ber? You called her Catherine. You regretted that you did not carry her to the convent. How you made me laugh sometimes, my sweet angel! When it had rained you launched spears of straw in the gutters, and you watched them. One day I gave you a willow battledore and a shuttlecock with yellow, blue, and green feathers. You have forgotten it. You were so cunning when you were little! You played. You put cherries in your ears. Those are things of the past. The forests through which we have passed with our child, the trees under which we have walked, the convents in which we have hidden, the games, the free laughter of childhood, all is in shadow. I imagined that all that belonged to me. There was my folly. Those Thenardiers were wicked. We must forgive them. Cosette, the time has come to tell you the name of your mother. Her name was Fantine. Remember that name, Fantine. Fall on your knees whenever you pronounce it. She suffered much and loved you much. Her measure of unhappiness was as full as yours of happiness. Such are the distributions of God. He is on high, He sees us all, and He knows what He does in the midst of His great stars. So I am going away, my children. Love each other dearly always. There is scarcely anything else in the world but that—to love one another. You will think sometimes of the poor old man who died here. Oh! my Cosette! it is not my fault, indeed, if I have not seen you all this time; it broke my heart; I went as far as the corner of the street, I must have seemed strange to the people who saw me pass. I looked like a crazy man once—I went out with no hat. My children, I do not see very clearly now; I had some things more to say, but it makes no difference. Think of me a little. You are blessed creatures. I do not know what is the matter with me, I see a light. Come nearer. I die happy. Let me put my hands upon your dear beloved heads.”

Cosette and Marius fell on their knees overwhelmed, choked with tears, each grasping one of Jean Valjean's hands. Those august hands moved no more.

He had fallen backward, the light from the candlesticks fell upon him; his white face looked up toward heaven; he let Cosette and Marius cover his hands with kisses; he was dead.



The night was starless and very dark. Without doubt, in the gloom some mighty angel was standing with outstretched wings awaiting the soul.

## VI

## GRASS HIDES AND RAIN BLOTS OUT

THERE is, in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, in the neighborhood of the Potter's Field, far from the elegant quartier of that city of sepulchres, far from all those fantastic tombs which display in presence of eternity the hideous fashions of death, in a deserted corner, beside an old wall, beneath a great yew on which the bindweed climbs among the dog-grass and the mosses, a stone. This stone is exempt no more than the rest from the leprosy of time, from the mould, the lichen, and the droppings of the birds. The air turns it black, the water green. It is near no path, and people do not like to go in that direction, because the grass is high and they would wet their feet. When there is a little sunshine the lizards come out. There is, all about, a rustling of wild oats. In the spring the linets sing in the tree.

This stone is entirely blank. The only thought in cutting it was of the essentials of the grave, and there was no other care than to make this stone long enough and narrow enough to cover a man.

No name can be read there.

Only many years ago a hand wrote upon it in pencil these four lines, which have become gradually illegible under the rain and the dust, and which are probably effaced:

*Il dort. Quoique le sort fût pour lui bien étrange,  
Il vivait. Il mourut quand il n'eut plus son ange,  
La chose simplement d'elle même arriva,  
Comme la nuit se fait lorsque le jour s'en va.*

















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